

Hafa Adai!

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\$1

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## 19th COVID death; 2 cases on Rota; 145 new cases ID'd

By JOSHUA SANTOS  
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REPORTER

The CNMI recorded its 19th COVID-19-related death last Friday. A total of 145 new cases were recorded in the CNMI across three days. And two cases were found on Rota—the island's first.

These were the latest in COVID-19-related news in the CNMI, with the Governor's

IPI not out of the woods yet in receivership case

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES  
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REPORTER

Although the U.S. District

COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Health- See DEATH on Page 4

Court for the NMI has relieved Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC of the final See IPI on Page 4

## House panel to review contracts related to COVID-19 response

By FERGIE DE LA TORRE  
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REPORTER

The House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee will be conducting an oversight hearing on all contracts pertaining to the CNMI's COVID-19 response, prompted in part by a \$165,000 billing for sanitation



Magofna

services that some lawmakers have questioned.

Rep. Corina L. Magofna (D-Saipan), who said she has been appointed to take lead on the CNMI's COVID-19 response,

See HOUSE on Page 4

### AT A GLANCE

As of 7:06pm, Jan. 9, 2022

#### VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: **96.7%**

Days since last community transmission **2**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	36,986
Fully Vaccinated:	35,468
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,296
Fully Vaccinated:	5,084
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,117

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	20,351	458 <sup>1</sup>	20,809
Recovered	19,050	43	19,093
Active	984	458	1,442
Deaths	273	1	274

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	3,453	145 <sup>2</sup>	3,598
Traced via Travel Screening	339	21	360
Traced via Community Screening	3,114	124	3,238
Deaths	18	0	18

<sup>1</sup>1/09=121; 1/08=94; 1/07=243

<sup>2</sup>1/08=37; 1/07=43; 1/06=65

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

## 16-year-old flies solo from Guam to Saipan

At just 16 years old, Guam's Lawrence C. Limtiaco became one of the youngest pilots to fly solo from Guam to Saipan, landing on Saipan yesterday morning, Sunday, Jan. 9, at 9am.

This flight completed the See SOLO on Page 4

### COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

#### LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor



#### FIRE ACADEMY VALEDICTORIAN

Rufina Fujihira Sablan is named the CNMI's first female Fire Academy valedictorian during the 14th cycle Fire Academy Graduation last Friday at the Kensington Resort Saipan.

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Story on Page 4

### CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



### INSIDE



#### LOCAL

Customers checking out the renovated McDonald's store on Middle Road are in for a treat.

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#### NATION

The omicron-fueled coronavirus infections in the U.S. is causing a breakdown in basic services.

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#### ASIA

At least 22 people died after being stuck in their vehicles during a heavy snowstorm.

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## Local

## FEMA's COVID-19 funeral assistance now at \$17,584 in NMI

## 'Unvaccinated travelers now tested on Day 5'

By JOSHUA SANTOS  
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REPORTER

Effective today, unvaccinated travelers will be tested for COVID-19 on Day 5 of their isolation period at a designated government site instead of Day 7, shortening the isolation time granted to individuals who test negative.

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muña disclosed this protocol changes during a radio news briefing last Friday.

In addition to this change, Muña said that other protocol changes are in the works in light of updated guidance and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We are going to be making some changes, especially with arrival protocols. There's been

a lot of guidance issued by the CDC and we've been unpacking them and [assessing] where it can fit," said Muña.

She said, however, that the CNMI's healthcare system capacity and the well-being of CHCC personnel remain as factors as CHCC considers possible COVID-19 protocol changes.



Muna

"At the end of the day, we are also looking at our healthcare system.

When we look at the number of hospitalizations, it's always concerning for our staff. We don't want burnout, [and] we want to make sure we have the bed [and] resource capacity," said Muña. "We're at a situation where we're managing it really well, and [we will] continue to monitor and again try to as much as possible make some preventative measures."

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE  
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REPORTER

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Program's

## USCG medevacs mariner from Palmyra Atoll

HONOLULU—An Air Station Barbers Point HC-130 Hercules aircrew conducted a medical evacuation for a 57-year-old South Korean mariner from Palmyra Atoll last Thursday.

The mariner was suffering abdominal pains and was flown to Hawaii where he was transferred by ambulance to Pali Momi Medical Center for treatment. He is reported to be in stable condition and awaiting surgery.

At 4:05pm, Wednesday, Joint Rescue Coordination Center Honolulu watchstanders received a report from the Daehan Shipping Agency stating a mariner aboard the fishing vessel *Hae Cheon* had been experiencing abdominal pain in the lower abdomen

financial aid to those who lost someone from the disease in the Marianas now stands at \$17,584, according to U.S. Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP).

since Dec. 20 and was having difficulty walking and eating.

The report stated the *Hae Cheon* was en route to Honolulu to transfer the mariner to medical services.

A Coast Guard duty flight surgeon was consulted and recommended the mariner be medically evacuated.

JRCC watchstanders diverted the *Hae Cheon* to Palmyra Atoll and deployed the Hercules aircrew to conduct the medevac.

At 7:02pm, Thursday, the Hercules aircrew arrived on Palmyra Atoll and embarked the mariner before departing for Hawaii.

The Hercules crew arrived in Hawaii at 11:30pm and transferred the mariner to awaiting emergency services. (USCG)

In his e-kilili newsletter over the weekend, Sablan disclosed that this week FEMA reported continuing use of the funeral assistance in the Marianas.

Last week, the delegate said that, as of Dec. 6, 2021, FEMA has already provided

\$10,894 in funeral assistance in the Marianas.

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. said over the weekend that there have been a total of

See FEMA on Page 4

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

## Jury selection cancelled

This is to inform all prospective jurors on panel "21GS" that the jury selection scheduled for today, January 10, 2022, at 8:30am and 12:30pm is cancelled until further notice. For more information, contact Clerk of Court Patrick Diaz at Superior Court at (670) 236-9783 or (670) 783-8522. (PR)

## Scheduled power service interruption tomorrow

There will be a scheduled power service interruption tomorrow, Jan. 11, 2022, from 2pm to 3pm in portions of Chalan Kanoa, to allow

the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to install three transformers at Shining Star, Inc. along Hamalap Lane.

Areas affected include Juan Nong St., Hamalap Ln., San Isidro Av., Sandy Beach Homes, Armatech Office, SPG Corp. Pepoy's Restaurant, and Surf Club Saipan Restaurant.

No water well or wastewater facility will be affected.

CUC continues to work diligently to minimize any inconvenience to its customers. For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation>). (PR)



# FREE COVID-19 SURVEILLANCE TESTING

Whole month of January 2022, Monday - Friday  
@ PIC, 1 PM - 3 PM

**MUST REGISTER** at <https://covidtesting.chcc.health>.

Slots will be added as soon as they are available. Photo ID required.

**SURVEILLANCE TESTING NOT RECOMMENDED FOR TRAVEL PURPOSES.**

For travel testing information, visit <https://chcc.gov.mp/covid19testing.php>.



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By **BEA CABRERA**  
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CORRESPONDENT

Customers checking out the newly renovated McDonald's store on Middle Road are in for a treat, as the store's dining area is almost unrecognizable with its modernist design, minimalist feel, and high-tech features.

But don't worry—the well-loved fast food chain may have a new look and feel but your favorite McDonald's food choices remain.

Once you enter, you immediately feel the clean and calm with the new earth color tones of beige, gray and black and the use of the McDonald's trademark bright yellow color to highlight seats. Aside from the digital kiosks lined up near the counter, glass dividers, bricks on the wall and softer lighting add to the modern feel.

The new look—which is simultaneous with McDonald's sister branches in Guam—encourages customers to stay longer, enjoy the experience, and have fun taking selfies at the area where “Crispy Fries” in big letters on the wall serve as a nice background for pictures.

According to McDonald's of Guam & Saipan Marketing director Divina Evaristo,

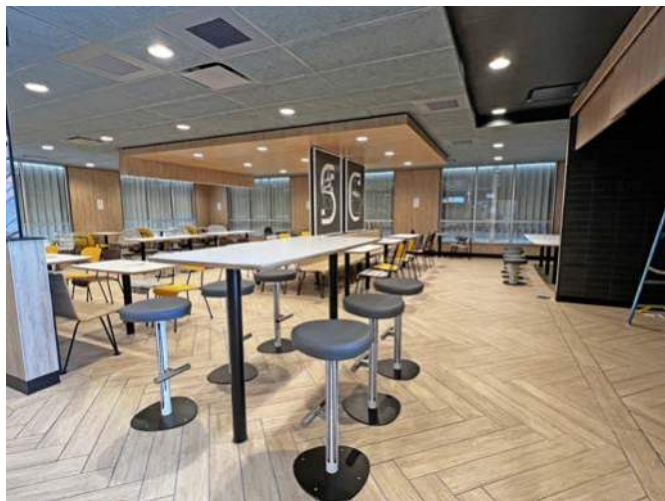
# McDonald's

## unveils modern look at its Middle Road branch



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

McDonald's Middle Road is almost unrecognizable with its modernist design, minimalist feel, and high-tech features.



the renovation is part of the changing look of McDonald's worldwide that aims to provide faster and convenient service to all customers.

“McDonald's of Guam and Saipan are bringing the ‘Experience of the Future’ to our customers that includes table service, self-order lobby kiosks, digital menu boards and a modern design of seating and wall coverings that is both comfortable, sleek and easy to maintain. ... We are now open for dine-in with all the local safety protocols intact such as requiring face coverings of staff and employees unless actively eating or drinking, temperature and wellness upon entering the building, and guests dining inside will need to sign in with contact information,” she said.

McDonald's of Saipan started Phase 1 of the renovation on Nov. 8, 2021 and Phase 2 will start soon on the drive thru and exterior.

Evaristo said that both Saipan and Guam stores up-

grades and remodeling have been ongoing,” she added. Both franchises are owned by the Ayuyu family.

This leveling up is aligned with McDonald's goal to enhance its digital service, including the recent launch of McDonald's “Mobile, Order and Pay” app, and using environment-friendly packaging.

Joe Ayuyu Jr., vice president of McDonald's of Guam and Saipan, said in an earlier interview that renovation plans were already in the pipeline but the pandemic delayed the execution. “...but that doesn't mean the work won't happen. ... We still intend to complete our plans. ... What we are most excited about is the renovation and bringing a new, modernized, fresh look to McDonald's. Part of this change is called ‘Experience of the Future,’ which will bring in digital menu boards, self-ordering kiosks and modernized seating and décor for our dining area.”

Aside from making dining inside the store a comfort-

able and pleasing experience for guests, Evaristo said that McDonald's service crew will enjoy the state-of-the-art tech-

nology registers with its sleek, built-in look.

“Loyal and new guests can expect new ways of order-

ing and receiving their food through the table service feature (place your order at the front counter or kiosk) and

find a comfortable seat and the food will be delivered to your table, courtesy of the table locator,” she said.

“If you are taking your order to go, a convenient screen shows your order number progress from being prepared or ready for pick up. ... The Garapan store's menu board is undergoing an upgrade to digital menu board as we speak,” she added.

“We want our valued customers to leave with great memories, celebrate milestones or just hang with friends and family. Whether they come inside for a quick bite or have a little time to sit and relax, in small groups or large family, guests will find the right seating groups to engage and interact while having their favorite delicious food,” Evaristo added.

Ayuyu Jr. said that they are pleased and excited to bring a fresh new look to the community of Saipan. “Keeping the latte stone part of the original architecture symbolizes our commitment to our local culture and our roots. We hope this project brings some positive news for a change and inject some activity into the local economy by using local contractors, labor and vendors.”

“We invite you all to come inside and enjoy the bright new look with the same cozy atmosphere, with your friends and loved ones,” he added.

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# Fire Academy sees its first female valedictorian

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
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REPORTER

The 14<sup>th</sup> Cycle of the CNMI's Fire Academy begat the first female valedictorian in CNMI history in Rufina Fujihira Sablan.

Sablan, a former Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services dispatcher, was named the CNMI's first ever female valedictorian last Friday during the 14<sup>th</sup> Cycle's graduation ceremony at Kensington

Hotel Saipan.

Being named valedictorian in an academy and profession that has been dominated by males since its inception was the most honorable part, according to Sablan.

"I really doubted myself but I pushed and here I am today, the valedictorian of the 14<sup>th</sup> cycle of the academy, the first female valedictorian. Before I joined the academy, I was actually a fire dispatcher. I was in the department already but I wanted

to climb the ladder and better myself and better my education and prove that I can do what the men can do, that females can do what men can do. It doesn't matter if we're perceived to be weaker, that we are smaller; we can do what men can do and that's exactly what I did," she said.

In entering the academy, Sablan was most worried about the physical phase because she thought she wouldn't be able to pass the physical requirement needed to become a firefighter.

"In the beginning of the academy, I really thought that I wouldn't surpass the physical requirement that was needed but I pushed myself. Though there were days when I wanted to quit, I just kept thinking that I'm doing it for my family, I'm doing it to make everyone proud, and I really want to help the community. I just kept thinking 'I want to be a firefighter so I can be there to help anyone through the tough times,'" Sablan said.

Sablan said when she found out she was the valedictorian, she was beyond happy and surprised at the same time. "I was so surprised. I really believed there were people smarter than me who were doing much better than me, but in the end, I got it and I am very happy. But I want to continue learning so that [I can] be there for the community," she said.

When asked what she will carry with her into her new journey as a firefighter, Sablan said it would have to be being there for one another.

"The lesson I will carry with me is the importance of building the bond with everyone you meet and having each other's backs. Even when we're suffering, we can do anything as long as we have each other as back up," she said.

Following Sablan and gaining the title of salutatorian was Juan Quitugua Jr. In addition, other awardees include Jojit Roque who took home the leadership award, and Yoshi Ray Mafnas who was named most physically fit.

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

## HOUSE

From Page 1

said that an invoice from Jogo Sanitation for \$165,000 prompted the Ways and Means Committee's interest to look further into all contracts associated with the COVID-19 response.

In line with this, Magofna has asked all agencies involved in the processing of contracts for documents relating to the CNMI government's COVID-19 response.

Magofna said many representatives have received a lot of inquiries, questions, and concerns about the Jogo Sanitation invoice, which, according to her, went viral on social media as well as on WhatsApp.

The lawmaker was referring to Jogo Sanitation Services owned by Jesseleo Taimanao Ogo, who, according to Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan), was being paid \$4,749 per day just to sanitize the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

Consequently, Magofna said, the Ways and Means Committee decided to conduct an oversight into the matter, not just on Ogo but on all contracts, so they could provide accurate information and answers to their con-

stituents/taxpayers.

Additionally, the committee will review the procurement practices taken on all COVID-19 contracts to ensure procurement regulations were adhered to.

"The intent is to inform the public that we are looking into the American Rescue Plan Act expenditures and how the funds are being spent, specifically contracts associated with the COVID-19 response," the lawmaker said.

She sent the request for information through a letter last Dec. 28 and 29 addressed to Public Assistance Officer Patrick C. Guerrero, CNMI Division of Procurement Services acting director Frank Aguon, Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig, CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management special assistant/incident commander Gerald J. Deleon Guerrero, and Governor's COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren F. Villagomez.

Magofna asked them submit the requested documents/reports to her office no later than last Friday, and today, Monday.

She asked for a listing of all vendors who received contracts associated with the CNMI government

COVID-19 response to provide goods and services from the start of the pandemic to date. Goods and services include quarantine facilities, personal protective equipment, supplies, meal services, sanitation services, and others.

In addition, Magofna asked for information such as vendor name, contract type, contract amount, date of execution, effective date, expiration date, contract number, and a brief description of what the contract is for.

The lawmaker also requested the following:

- Copies of all contracts for all vendors whether local, foreign, and/or other U.S. jurisdictions (Guam) from the start of the pandemic to date.

- Listing and copies of all disbursements/payments issued to all vendors, including invoices and information such as payment date, payment amount, invoice number, description of goods and/or services, service period, etc. from the start of the pandemic to date.

- Any/all documents, transmittals, correspondence (i.e., emails, fax, etc.) and any other forms of communication as they relate to contracts associated with the CNMI government COVID-19 response.

## SOLO

From Page 1

first of the four flights that is required in order to obtain a private pilot license.

Upon touchdown on Saipan in a Cessna 172P, Limtiaco flew to Rota, and returned to Guam afterward to conclude his solo flight at 12:14pm yesterday. Limtiano will be making a second cross country solo flight on

Saturday, Jan. 15, 2022 following the same route.

Limtiaco, who is a motocross racer and assistant commander of the second platoon NJROTC at Guam's Father Duenas Memorial High School, is also a student pilot.

Since the age of 12, Limtiaco had a goal to fly planes in the U.S. military.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres congratulates Lawrence on this achievement, "What Lawrence accomplished is an amazing feat. To fly

solo from Guam to Saipan at such a young age is impressive. Lawrence is an inspiration to youth in the region who want to become pilots, and has proven that with ambition and hard work, that is possible. On behalf of the CNMI, we send our congratulations to you, as well as your proud parents, Larry and Jenn Limtiaco. We pray for your continuous safety and success as you embark on your future flights," Torres said. (PR)

## IPI

From Page 1

judgement granted in favor of U.S.A. Fanter Corp., Ltd., the receivership has not been dissolved completely as other creditors have stepped into USA Fanter's shoes as to the limited receivership.

According to an order from District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona, she found the \$2.45 million bond secured by IPI was sufficient to relieve the casino investor of the court's judgment in favor of USA Fanter, which includes the limited receivership and the mechanic's lien the court granted in the contractor's favor.

"The court finds that IPI has fulfilled its obligation to satisfy the bond requirements under Rule 62(b)

and Local Rule 62.1 and therefore a stay of USA Fanter's judgment pending appeal is appropriate. Further, because all means of satisfaction of judgment are now stayed, relief from the limited receivership as applied to this case is warranted," she said.

However, Manglona did not fully dissolve the receivership as other creditors have "piggybacked" on the judgment originally granted in favor of USA Fanter.

"Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 60(b) states that the court may relieve a party...from a final judgment, order, or proceeding based on a number of circumstances, including that the judgment has been satisfied, released, or discharged or any other reason that justifies relief. Here, because IPI has fulfilled its bond obligations, the court finds that relief under Rule 60(b) is appropriate in this case. This decision

does not, however, dissolve the receivership as it applies to the Other Creditors just yet," the judge stated.

Currently, the stay on the receivership until the end of January is as to the receivership between IPI and its other creditors.

The court has ordered the parties to return to court on Feb. 3 to hear arguments on an extension on the stay of the receivership.

In her order, Manglona also granted a stay on USA Fanter's previous motion for foreclosure of a mechanic lien.

"Because the bond has been satisfied pursuant to Rule 62(b), all means of judgment including foreclosure of a mechanic's lien is now stayed. Therefore, USA Fanter's Motion to Foreclose Mechanic's Lien is now deemed withdrawn and/or moot," Manglona said.

## DEATH

From Page 1

care Corp. confirming the 19th COVID-19-related death in the CNMI in a news release last Friday. As per its standard procedure, the CHCC news release did not disclose further details of the new fatality. A previous CHCC statement cited patient confidentiality and privacy for this lack of further details.

In Guam, its Joint Information Center was notified that the territory's 274th COVID-19-related fatality occurred at the Guam Memorial Hospital on Dec. 2, 2021. The patient was a 76-year-old female, vaccinated with underlying health conditions. She tested positive on Sept. 18, 2021. Also, JIC reported that Guam has a total of 458 new positive cases identified on Jan. 6, 7, and 8, 2022.

Separately, in a series of news releases, CHCC disclosed that a total of 145 cases were confirmed positive for COVID-19 in the CNMI.

CHCC first reported late Thursday night 65 cases that were identified from surveillance and travel testing on Jan. 4 and 5, 2022, followed by 43 more cases reported last Friday and identified from surveillance and travel testing on Jan. 6, 2022. A third news release reported 37 more cases identified from surveillance and travel testing on Jan. 7, 2022.

As for the Rota cases, CHCC reported that the two were identified and confirmed positive on Jan. 7 at the Rota Health Center. CHCC added that a total of four close contacts were identified and that all four tested negative. "Contact tracing will continue until all probable cases are identified and tested," said CHCC.

Of the 43 new cases that were confirmed positive for COVID-19 on

Jan. 6, 13 were found through contact tracing, 22 through community testing, and eight through travel testing.

As for the 37 positive cases on Jan. 7, 17 were found through contact tracing, 11 through community testing, and nine through travel testing.

As of Jan. 7, there have been 2,826 recoveries, 465 active cases, and 16 deaths since Oct. 28. As of Jan. 8, there were 14 active hospitalizations: seven unvaccinated, seven vaccinated, and two on a ventilator.

For vaccination efforts, CHCC reported that the CNMI recently surpassed 100,000 COVID-19 vaccines administered since vaccines were made available more than a year ago. CHCC also reported that 718 COVID-19 shots were administered on Jan. 8, bringing the CNMI's vaccination rate to 96.7%.

For those wishing to learn more about how to protect you and your families safe from COVID-19, CHCC asks the community to visit <https://www.staysafecnmi.com/live-covidsafe/>. The website has links to a COVID-19 guidebook, a "10 things" graphic depicting at-home COVID-19 symptom management methods, up-to-date CNMI entry and quarantine protocols, additional information sources, and contact information for those with more questions/ concerns.

If you have concerns regarding possible exposure to a positive case, CHCC asks you to call its contact tracers at 670-285-1942, 670-286-1710, or 670-286-1711.

If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, which include fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, and new loss of taste or smell, CHCC asks you to see your healthcare provider or call the CHCC Tele-Triage hotline at 670-233-2067.

caused by COVID-19.

"To apply for the aid, call toll-free to (844) 684-6333 from 9am to 9pm ET, Monday through Friday," Sablan said.

Patrick C. Guerrero, who is the governor's authorized representative, said the COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Program is a direct assistance, which means that the individual will have to apply on their own. Guerrero said the program is available to applicants of the CNMI who have incurred funeral expenses due to the virus on or after Jan. 20, 2020.

## FEMA

From Page 2

19 pandemic-related deaths since March 2020.

The U.S. Congress provided this aid in the 2021 Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act.

Sablan reiterated that applicants for assistance must be U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals, or qualified aliens. He said the death must have occurred in the U.S. and have been



# Palacios-Apatang tandem opens campaign headquarters

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
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REPORTER

Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang opened Friday night their headquarters in Garapan, signifying the official launch of their campaign as independent candidates for the November 2022 gubernatorial election.

The new headquarters is located next to the Mobil/McDonald's branch along Beach Road.

Palacios told his supporters and family members that this opening is the beginning of their long, hard campaign leading up to the November election.

Palacios said the opening of their headquarters was supposed to be a small event, as the plan was just to have a blessing and gathering but he's happy to see that a lot of supporters took the time to join them.

"I want to thank all those that have prepared our humble working space for AD 2022," he said, referring to the acronym of his and Apatang's first names.

Apatang delivered his remarks in the vernacular.

Former House speaker Oscar Babauta, who chairs the executive committee to elect Palacios-Apatang, said the evening signifies the official launching of their campaign.

"We will be moving forward with an aggressive and bigger movement to our people of the Commonwealth," Babauta said, and that Pala-

Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, extreme left, and Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang, third from right, pose for a group photo with former governor Benigno R. Fitial, fourth from left, and some lawmakers and supporters during Friday's opening of the Palacios-Apatang headquarters next to Mobil/McDonald's in Garapan.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

cios-Apatang will be making an appearance on Rota and Tinian and make an impact there in a week and the following week, respectively.

Babauta also pointed out that, while Torres spends \$250,000 to hire lawyers, team Palacios-Apatang has the services of two lawyers—former attorney general and former Tinian mayor Joey San Nicolas and Michael Evangelista—free of charge.

The incumbent lawmakers present were vice speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan), floor leader Ralph N. Yumul (R-Saipan), Rep. Joel Camacho (Ind-Saipan), and Rep. John Paul Sablan (R-Saipan).

Others present were former governor Benigno R. Fitial, former House speaker Pedro R. Deleon Guerrero, and Ramon B. Camacho, who is running for Saipan mayor.



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# After 28 years, Mesta, Quintanilla bid Hyatt farewell

By ERICKA SANTIAGO  
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SALES ASSOCIATE

Two of Hyatt Regency Saipan's top directors will soon be passing the baton, with both Josephine Mesta, director of human resources, and Rosalyn Quintanilla, director of rooms, handing over the reins after having been with the company for about 28 years now.

Although both have expressed sadness at leaving the Hyatt Regency Saipan family, they feel their successors are

ready to take over and accomplish greater things for the hotel. And it's not as if they'll be leaving behind their customer service talents; Mesta plans to even expand her goals to the larger community.

In individual interviews, both have shared their thoughts and feelings about closing this chapter in their life and the love that they'd had with what they were doing at Hyatt throughout the years.

## 'Love what you do'

Josephine Mesta believes that you cannot work in an environment productively if you do not love it. You cannot give great service to others if you are not happy with what you are doing. Each day there's a new challenge to overcome in the human resources department, and this is why she has worked for the company for 28 years.

Mesta actually did not plan on pursuing a career in human

resources. "It was an accident; I was working at [Northern Marianas College] running TOPPS and the objective of the degree program is to feed the workforce. So I was actually sending students to Hyatt for employment. Then one day, the director of HR said she is planning to go off island and Hyatt will be needing a new HR director," she said.

Mesta jumped at this chance. With her educational

background and experience in the workforce, she knew she could get a job anywhere but she wanted to try working for an international company "where nobody knows me and will judge me for who I am." She was interviewed six times by the corporate office before she was given the job. "The job wasn't easy; I've had days where I had to leave late at night or come in as early as 4 in the morning. ... But I enjoyed every moment of it."

Mesta believes, though, that now is the time for the next generation to step up, and this informs her decision to let go of her job at Hyatt. "All good things must come to an end. So I can move on and someone else can enjoy what I have been enjoying these past few years working as the HR director," Mesta said. Her biggest reward since working for Hyatt are seeing all the people who have climbed the ladder, the people she had mentored and groomed.

Mesta's plans after retiring include traveling to see her children off-island and to pivot toward training others so that Saipan can be seen as a world-class destination. She wants to do something different now and do it at a bigger scope.

"Right now, I am only limited to training others here, but I want to train the whole island if I possibly can," she said.

She wants to focus on improving customer service training. "In order for us to be the destination we want to be, the people coming in our island need to know that we are kind and we have excellent customer service and that they can be taken care of. Regardless of where you work—government or private sector—it doesn't matter." She also plans on helping those with disabilities on island. She wants to change the way they are viewed in the work force.

When asked what the biggest change at Hyatt was when she was the HR director, Mesta said it was changing perceptions. Many people have a set opinion about the local people and of Saipan, she said, and Hyatt has proven that stereotypes are not true at all. Right now, almost all Hyatt employees are local residents. "Changing this hotel from 20% locals to 90% locals is a big change; it was a team effort. We need to take care of our local people before hiring outside. That's the biggest thing we have done here."

Mesta stated that the one thing she will miss about her job is the people. "The people

that I work with are really my family. I'll miss them the most. I have had other jobs where I left, but I have never had this bittersweet feeling that I feel now leaving this hotel," she said.

As Hyatt's outgoing HR director, Mesta has a standard piece of advice that she gives newly hired employees: "Love what you do, love why you're doing it and love who you're doing it with. Love your team. If you love what you do, it is never work," she said.

If there is one word to describe how she feels about working with Hyatt for 28 years, Mesta said it would be "Proud."

"I am proud to have been a part of this company," she added.

## Opportunities to grow

Born and raised on Tinian, Rosalyn Quintanilla has worked her way up at Hyatt Regency Saipan in different roles over time, as an accounting manager, housekeeping manager, and now the director of rooms.

"Hyatt gives us the opportunity to assist in all departments. Whenever there is a big event, we all help out. Hyatt gives us all an opportunity to grow," Quintanilla said. She handles the fitness center, spa, security department, front office, and housekeeping.

Quintanilla echoed Mesta that Hyatt's biggest change over the years is that their employees are almost all local resident. Another big accomplishment she mentioned was cross training the employees, meaning she has trained employees to do other duties out of their regular positions so that everyone can help out when it is needed. "We started to train them even before COVID. And now it has helped a lot since we had to let go of our employees due to the pandemic. Our employees can work at any department and we give them the opportunity to develop more experience-wise."

She has always liked working with people but Quintanilla said that working at the Hyatt was at whole new level. "I love my job so much that when I wake up, I get ready not to go to work, but to come to the place I love." Quintanilla loves what she does for the company and her employees. "Without my employees I am not going to be where I am. They are the legwork of the whole Rooms Division. It all goes hand in hand. If you take care of your employees, they will take good care of your customers."

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)



Mesta



Quintanilla



HYATT REGENCY®

SAIPAN



# NMI receives historic \$495,909 for home energy assistance

Due to passage of the American Rescue Plan Act, the Northern Mariana Islands has received a record \$495,909 for LIHEAP, or the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, that is available this fiscal year.

As part of a state-by-state breakdown of funding, the Biden-Harris administration reported that in addition to an annual appropriation of \$212,305 for the Northern Mariana Islands, the territory received an additional \$283,604 in

funds from the American Rescue Plan—more than double the territory's typical annual funding.

The total of \$495,909 is the highest amount the Northern Mariana Islands has ever received in LIHEAP to help Americans struggling with home energy costs.

According to a White House press release last Friday, this funding will help states, localities and tribes address home energy costs this winter. The Administration announced that a total of

14 major utility companies have made commitments to prevent shutting off utilities for Americans applying for aid and expedite assistance, with seven new commitments building on commitments made last November.

■ **The American Rescue Plan more than doubled LIHEAP funding:** In 2021, the Biden-Harris administration and Congressional Democrats delivered \$8 billion in LIHEAP funding nationally, more than doubling typical annual appropriations, thanks to an additional \$4.5 billion

provided by the American Rescue Plan. These funds represent the largest appropriation in a single year since the program was established in 1981. These resources are already allowing states across the country to provide more home energy relief to low income Americans than ever before.

■ **The American Rescue Plan provided additional historic resources for utility relief including the Emergency Rental Assistance Program and State & Local Fiscal Recovery**

**Fund:** The American Rescue Plan provided other critical resources that states and localities can use to address home energy costs. ERA programs, which received an additional \$21.5 billion in funding from the American Rescue Plan, can provide help with past-due utility bills or ongoing assistance with energy costs to help distressed renters avoid shut-offs and keep current on expenses. State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds can also be deployed to help deliver energy relief

to families.

The administration has taken action to ensure that these historic resources are distributed swiftly and equitably this winter:

**Encouraged states to plan early:** In November, the White House called on states, localities, and tribes to plan early to distribute American Rescue Plan funds to address home energy costs this winter. (PR)

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

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### COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLANDS NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

## Public Notice

This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds  
01/06/2022

### Early Notice and Public Review of a Proposed Activity in a 100-Year Floodplain

This is to give notice that Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) as determined that the following proposed **Beach Road Improvement Phase III & IV project** under the **Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program grant number B-19-DV-69-0001 and B-19-DV-69-002** is located in the **100-year floodplain**. NMHC will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the action in the **floodplain** and the potential impacts on the floodplain from the proposed action, as required by **Executive Order 11988**, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands. The proposed project(s) is located on **Route 33, Beach Road, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**.

The public may view the full description of the project and provide comments by visiting the NMHC website at [www.nmhcgov.net](http://www.nmhcgov.net) by clicking on the public notice/announcement tab and selecting the Environmental Review Records or you may visit the NMHC CDBG-DR website at <https://www.cnmicbgr.com>.

Written comments must be received by NMHC on or before January 24, 2022. A minimum 15 calendar day comment period will begin the day after the publication and end on the 16th day after the publication. Written comments may also be submitted through the following methods: email at [nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp](mailto:nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp); or facsimile to 1-670-234-9021; or hand deliver to the NMHC Central Office located in Garapan, Saipan, Attention CDBG-DR Project Division.

/s/  
Ralph DLG. Torres  
Governor, CNMI



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# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

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### EDITORIAL

## Democracy is fragile. That's what Jan. 6 taught us

It was unthinkable that Americans would storm the Capitol a year ago Thursday with the intention of doing harm to members of Congress and overturning a lawful election. Yet it happened.

On this anniversary of a dangerous extremist assault on the seminal institutions of American democracy, our nation must ask honestly and openly why this happened and what needs to happen to unite this nation around an understanding of the common good.

That afternoon of violence on the steps and within the halls of Congress should have taught us that we can't take our democracy for granted. And that is why the prosecutions of Jan. 6 rioters and the House Select Committee's investigation into that event are so important to understanding the hateful, intolerant and authoritarian strains infecting our national discourse.

There are many questions to be answered: Why then-President Donald Trump didn't intervene sooner; why GOP lawmakers who denounced the attack in real time now deny the seriousness of the assault. And most of all we need to hold to account elected officials and others who encouraged an attempted insurrection.

These uncomfortable questions speak to a venomous national dialogue that now normalizes misinformation, hate, illiberalism and nationalism, and amplifies those messages through social media. It should be more than disconcerting that Homeland Security and the Department of Justice have long identified white nationalist extremism as the most immediate internal threat to the Republic. And when members of Congress such as Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz muse of "national divorce" of Red and Blue states in a way designed to unravel the tenets of national unity, militancy and alienation replace the resolve to preserve the union.

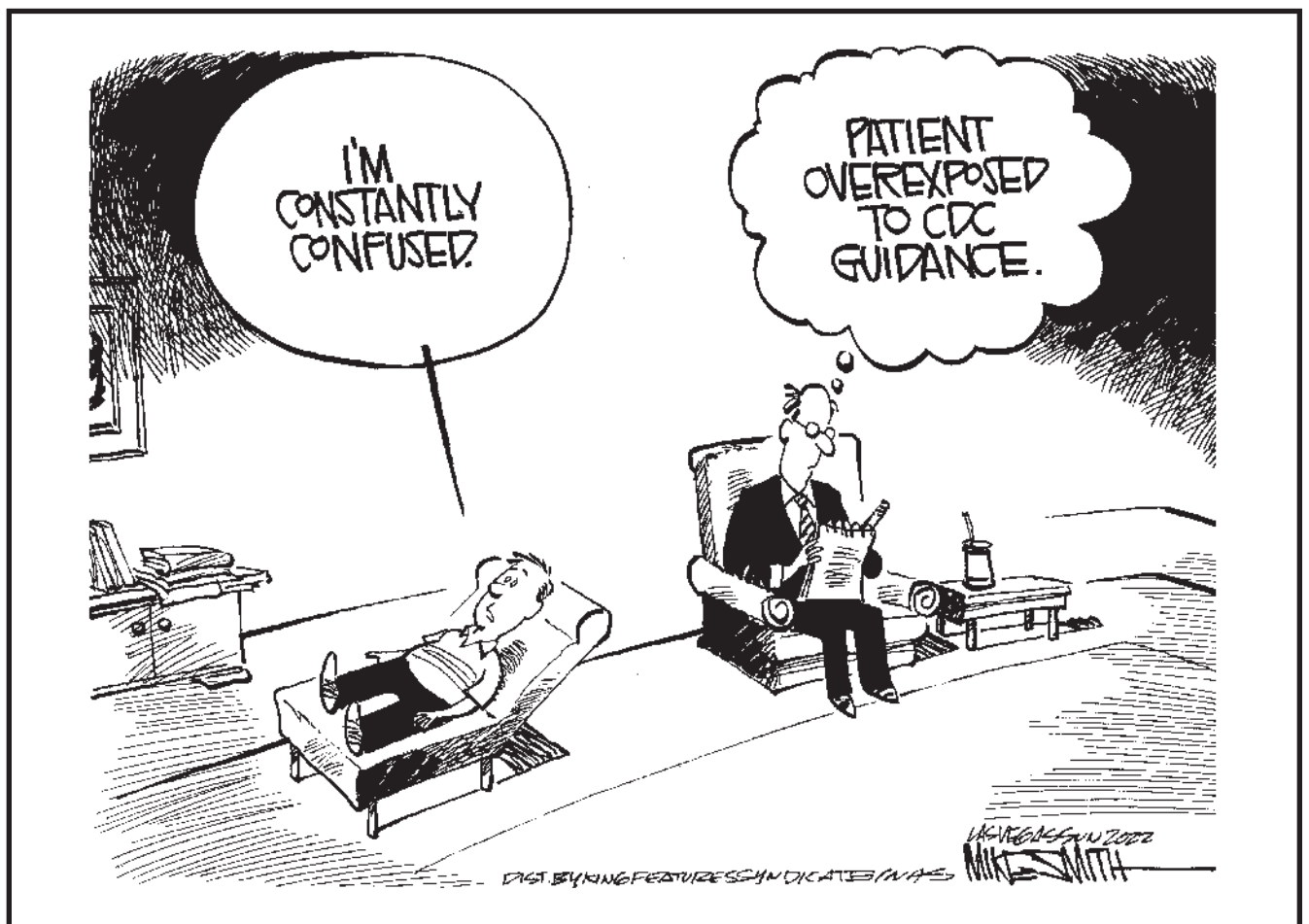
Thirty-four percent of Americans think violent action against the government is sometimes justified, according to a new poll from The Washington Post and the University of Maryland, a percentage that is considerably higher than in past polls.

The partisan divide is even more troubling. Roughly, 40% of Republicans, 41% of independents and 23% of Democrats said violence against the government is sometimes justified. And a separate CBS News-YouGov poll noted that 62% of Americans said they expect violence over losing in future presidential elections and that only 38% said they expect the losing side will concede peacefully.

Is this what we have become, a nation that is willing to settle political disagreements through violence and the demonization of fellow Americans? If it is, then we proceed at our existential peril.

No nation has remained perpetually united, a truth that until now most Americans have rejected as a possibility in our future. The genius of this country is that we have repeatedly resisted corrosive forces that could tear us apart and embraced the principles of responsible governance, no matter how im-

See DEMOCRACY on Next Page



## Is stagflation returning in 2022?

During the late 1970s, American families experienced stagflation—a combination of economic stagnation and significantly higher inflation. By the summer of 1980, unemployment hit 7.8 percent and the economy was actually shrinking. On the year, inflation spiked 12.3 percent.

Some fear that today's slowing economic growth (2.3 percent annualized last quarter) and the steepest price hikes in 40 years portend a return to stagflation.

Real weekly earnings have plummeted more than 6 percent since the middle of last year, and the cost of living eclipsed wage increases. Dramatic price hikes in housing, rent, vehicles, gasoline, and some food staples have fueled the feeling that something in our economy is amiss.

Government mandates, regulations, spending, and borrowing are largely to blame for this painful increase in the cost of living. These governmental actions suppressed the supply of goods and services while spurring demand.

Social distancing, quarantines, and shutdowns diminished the ability to produce goods, provide services, travel and deliver merchandise. School and child care closures made it impossible for many parents to work. Meanwhile, the elimination of work requirements for some welfare programs, generous unemployment benefits, and rounds of stimulus checks disincentivized work.

Although jobs are in ample supply (openings remain near an all-time high of 10.5 million), 4 million fewer people are working compared to just 2 years ago. Many have dropped out of the labor force altogether. The proportion of the working-age population working or actively seeking employment is now under 62 percent—the lowest it's been since the 1970s, when women were entering the workforce en masse.

To fill open positions, employers are offering higher wages. These rising wages reflect a government-created shortage of willing workers rather than an increase in worker productivity. Indeed, productivity plunged more steeply in the last quarter than at any time since 1947.

This disconnect of wages from productivity squeezes the bottom lines of businesses while still being insufficient to keep pace with inflation. Businesses are forced to pass these rising costs on to customers even as the customers endure subpar service stemming from unfilled positions.

It's not just labor that's in short supply. Shortages in manufactured goods—including household appliances, vehicles, and televisions—stem largely from a shortage of microchips needed for numerous steps in the manufacturing process. Government COVID-19 policies caused unpredictable, often abrupt changes to supply and demand. This created a domino effect in the manufacturing process.

By **JOEL GRIFFITH**

The Heritage Foundation

Joel Griffith is a research fellow in The Heritage Foundation's Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies.



Of course, this is just a part of the supply chain problem. Environmental and labor policies in the state of California are largely to blame for shipping backlogs within the U.S. COVID-19 policies such as social distancing requirements, vaccine mandates, and testing regimens contribute to the empty shelves, as do the rolling lockdowns at international ports and factories. Many of these government edicts provide little health benefit at enormous societal cost.

Even as government policies suppressed supply, governments stimulated demand for goods and services by printing and distributing massive amounts of borrowed money. Throughout the pandemic, the Federal Reserve purchased over \$3.2 trillion of federal debt. Our central bank also nearly doubled its stake in mortgage backed securities (MBSs), purchasing more than \$1.2 trillion and pumping up housing costs in the process.

As the central bank purchased these and other assets from investors, investors funneled those newly minted dollars into other assets. This gusher of cash helped push overall stock market capitalization 45 percent above pre-pandemic levels, even though economic output barely budged (up just 1.4 percent).

Asset price inflation has allowed large investors to exit the crisis far better off than before, but non- and small-investor families are finding it harder to make ends meet as prices rise. At their last meeting, Federal Reserve board members appeared to recognize that their actions are partly to blame for this inflation. They suggested the Fed may need to reduce the size of its balance sheet: in other words, soak up some of the many dollars printed during the prior two years.

President Joe Biden claims his "Build Back Better" tax-and-spend package will "transform the economy." In reality, it represents an embrace of radical, socialist policies that will exacerbate increases in prices, labor shortages and supply chain disruptions Americans are facing.

Make no mistake, the enormous expansions of government spending being proposed would cost families dearly. Americans will pay either through direct taxation, higher borrowing costs (as the government competes with businesses for available capital), or the hidden tax of inflation as the central bank purchases government debt. And inflation can be the most destructive and painful tax of all.



# A reality-check: Thank you, Gov. Torres

Part 2 of three parts

By contrast, our young Gov. Torres has been one of the most productive and most effective governors in CNMI history. His administrations have seen the first time in CNMI history that the retiree pensions have been prioritized. Gone are the days of daily headlines threatening nonpayment of pensions and, in fact, the Settlement Fund administration has consistently given the administration high marks. Gone are the days of losing, mismanaging, and not taking advantage of grants, with the CNMI receiving more federal grant assistance than at any time in its history and seeing the return of grants lost in previous administrations. Gone are the days where, despite present challenges, there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

While we are making our way out of this COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen what Gov. Torres is capable of doing post-disaster. He led the CNMI to record tourism, investor, job, and pay numbers following Soudelor. Following the disastrous Super Typhoon Yutu and before the pandemic, the CNMI was on-track once again to booming tourism. Unlike the bleak days of the long-term economic downturn of the mid-2000s through early 2010s, we know we have a leader in Gov. Torres who knows how to resuscitate and grow the economy. In fact, despite the ongoing pandemic, the administration has been laying the foundation for the reboot of the economy by improving visitor sites, securing historic grants to build world-class sports facilities and world-class festival and event facilities, meeting with new airlines to create new markets, and seeing beautification and improvement projects through his Governor's Council of Economic Advisors. The list of accomplishments by Gov. Torres'

administrations is exceptional, and no matter how hard his politically-motivated detractors work to negate those accomplishments, they are record. If you benefit from increased food assistance, if you appreciate the construction of the traditional canoe at the Seafaring Traditions Program, if you were a recipient of assistance through the pandemic, if you appreciate our repaired walk paths, if you aren't suffering from low or no water for days and weeks at a time or power outages every other day, if you could not retain employment without the increased child care assistance, if you were cared for through the shelter for months following Yutu, if you were glad the CNMI was able to provide the COVID-19 vaccinations well-ahead of most states, if you enjoy the Inos Peace Park, the new San Vicente Children's Park, the Motocross Park, the CNMI Soccer Training Facility, or any of the other new or rejuvenated community and youth centers, you have the administration and Gov. Torres to thank.

Gov. Torres has earned and deserves enumerable credit. If the buck stops with a governor when there are problems, they certainly stop with the governor with the successes. I did not know Gov. Torres when I received a call from him one morning in 2016 asking if I would consider serving as the secretary of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs. It was a totally out-of-the-blue call, and I actually thought it was a prank call by a friend. I didn't even own a cellphone at the time, so he had called via a landline. My appointment by Gov. Torres, I later learned, spoke volumes about him. He didn't care where you were from, what your politics were, whether you'd been involved in politics or you'd been a donor. I found over time that he didn't care about any of that. He cared about whether or not you could do the best job you could for the people. All one needs to do is look at the makeup of his Cabi-

By **ROBERT HUNTER**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

*Robert Hunter is the senior policy adviser at the Office of the Governor.*



net and staff to know that. He's appointed persons from all aspects of life, of all ages, a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and a variety of political leanings. The one thing I learned that Gov. Torres most cared about was people. If you brought a problem, concern, or plan to the governor, his first concern was always the people involved, especially if children and *man'amko* were involved. I discovered, over my time, that the governor is an extremely decent man, who always deferred to what he believed would most benefit the regular person. He cares about people. I grew into a great appreciation for the governor because of this. It didn't matter what decision on the table that there was to be made, he would defer to the one that was best for the people...even if for other reasons it was the most difficult choice. Some wonder why I have been such a staunch supporter of the governor. This is why. As his political opponents have spent their every breath trying to demonize him for their own political gain, I have felt a personal obligation not to let them get away with that. Any of the governor's staff would confirm that he has constantly advised his staff to focus on the work, carry out the positive work, and ignore the political critics. Unfortunately, tolerating bullies is not in my DNA.

*To be continued tomorrow.*

## Governor's legal counsel responds to JGO chair's statement

**G**il Birnbrich, legal counsel for the governor, issued the following statement in response to the statement issued late Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2021, by Rep. Celina Babauta, who chairs the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations:

Late Wednesday, the chairwoman of the House Judiciary and Governmental Operations issued a press release within which she stated that Gov. Ralph Torres "attempted to manipulate the Judicial Branch by requesting a closed-door meeting between himself and the chief justice."

This is not true.

The governor *did not* seek a personal meeting with the chief of justice. His counsel requested a conference to seek clarification of the chief justice's order to notify the clerk of court of any "good cause or reason" why Judge Bellas should not sit on the case. The governor was not going to be present at any meeting allowed by the chief justice.

Counsel also sought the same clarification by letter. Specifically, counsel asked whether such "good cause or reason" was limited to the ordinary grounds for judicial disqualification, or whether it was intended to include a broader range of concerns.

Significantly, neither the governor nor his counsel impugned or maligned the qualifications of Judge Bellas. Counsel wrote:

"Governor Torres does not believe any statutory grounds exist that disqualify Judge Bellas."

Counsel then expressed the governor's broader concerns as follows:

Nevertheless, the governor believes that neither Judge Bellas nor any other current or former CNMI judge should serve as judge pro tempore in this matter. The CNMI is a small community; there is scarcely a family that does not have ties to the government and a history of close political allegiances. So extensive are these ties that all five sitting Superior Court judges have had to disqualify themselves for one reason or another. In light of the highly partisan atmosphere surrounding the governor's ongoing dispute with the committee, the governor believes that no single CNMI judge, current or former, can either be truly insulated from it or, no less important, be perceived by the public, reasonably or not, as insulated from it. ...In the highly charged political atmosphere surrounding this case, it is essential that there be no public perception whatsoever that the judge may be partial politically to one side or the other. The losing side may well want to cry foul, yet it is in the best interest of the whole community, as well as the health of political debate in the Commonwealth, that no hook be provided for either side to hang its hat on.

By **GIL BIRNBRICH**

Special to the Saipan Tribune



This can only be attained by having a judge from outside the Commonwealth preside in the Superior Court.

As this letter makes clear, the governor did not "question the integrity of the CNMI judiciary" as the chairwoman claimed. On the contrary, his counsel specifically stated: "The governor has great faith in the ability and integrity of CNMI judges," but also noted that "sometimes the better part of judgment is knowing when to step away."

Unfortunately, the chairwoman's distortion and misrepresentation of the governor's concerns demonstrate all too clearly that those concerns are valid, and that, if a partisan spin can be put on anything related to this dispute, it will be.

## Statement on state of COVID-19 at DOC

By **WALLY F. VILLAGOMEZ**

SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

*Editor's Note: The author issued the following statement last Friday.*

**A**t the Department of Corrections, the health and safety of our inmate population and staff is our top priority. Since the spike of COVID-19 in the community, it was inevitable that some staff and inmates would be exposed or found positive for COVID-19. There have been less than 10% of the inmate population found positive for CO-

VID-19, but they were separated from other inmates.

Inmates and staff have been tested several times. Each inmate is monitored daily for symptoms, and if necessary are tested again. Each staff member is required to report symptoms, have temperature readings when entering the facility, and follow CDC and CHCC recommendations regarding hand washing and/or hand sanitizing. Additionally, all staff and inmates are issued N95 masks. All officers are required to wear them within the facility, and the inmates are required to wear their masks if they are outside of their cell.

Currently, there are only three inmates that require separation, and the positive officers have returned to work after the required time for

quarantine. Staffing has been strained due to COVID-19, but the Department of Corrections has hired six employees in 2021. While DPS has assisted with security of inmates that are being separated, every Corrections officer must attend an academy prior to entering the facility. DOC has received many applications for the upcoming Corrections Academy. The Academy has been planned with the assistance of Northern Marianas College, Department of Public Safety, and the Attorney General's Office at the beginning of 2022 with approximately 30 positions.

*Wally F. Villagomez is the commissioner of the CNMI Department of Corrections.*

## DEMOCRACY

From Page 8

perfect, that embody the spirit of *E pluribus unum*, the nation's motto since 1782.

In his book "The Untied States of America: Polarization, Fracturing, and our Future," futurist Juan Enriquez concludes that it is a miracle that the United States has held together for as long as it has, noting that "we have paid little attention to how many

countries split and disappear because our own hemisphere has been remarkably stable." Britain and Spain once had great naval fleets, he writes. Latin is a dead language. The pound was once a leading currency. The euro didn't exist. Nations have been partitioned and repartitioned. Most of the countries in the United Nations weren't there 50 years ago.






America is experiencing ideological, religious, political and economic fractures that test basic beliefs in uncharted ways. We share common values, or so we wish to believe, but also have allowed conspiracy theories, unvarnished exercise of power and

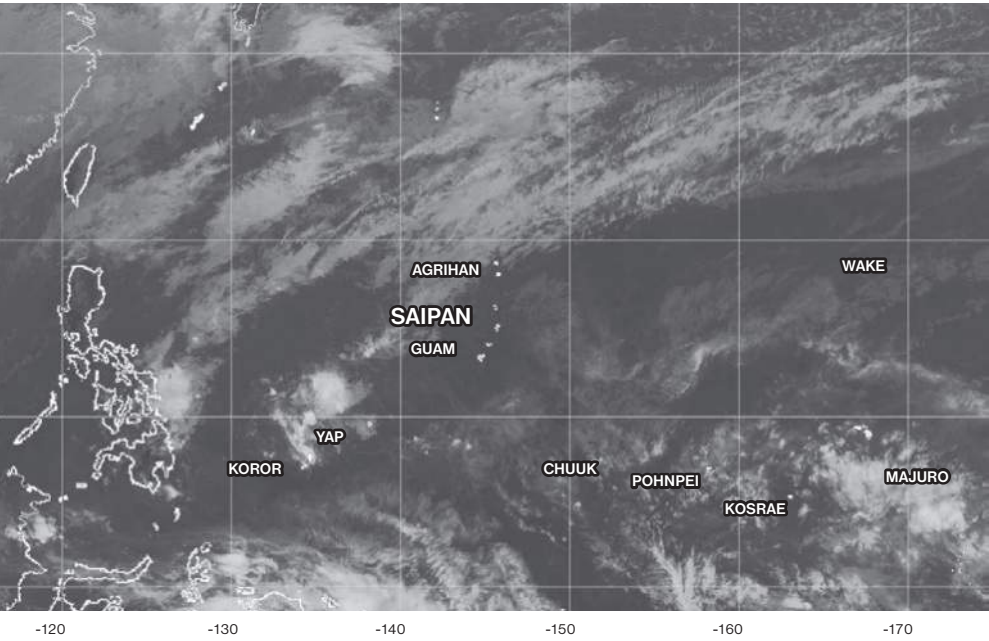
selective interpretations of selective facts, or in the absence of facts, fantasies and outright lies, to define and divide us.

If we believe America is an exceptional nation, then we must also believe in peaceful resolutions of political disputes, the peaceful transfer of power and the enduring importance of constitutional norms and institutions. What we can't abide is a medieval storming of the castle and capitulation to the darkest and worst instincts.



# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.		Mostly cloudy with scattered light showers. Light and variable winds.		Partly cloudy. Isolated showers.		Partly cloudy. Isolated showers.		Partly cloudy. Isolated showers.	
86°	75°	85°	76°	85°	75°	85°	75°	85°	75°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 8:03 AM, SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180. Moderate to fresh trade winds prevail in the Marianas, bringing partly cloudy skies and isolated showers today. Ipan buoy indicates seas between 5 and 6 feet, and are projected to stay as such through tonight.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)

## STOP THE SPREAD

**T**he Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

**Continue good hand hygiene**

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.


**Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic**

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
  - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
  - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

**Rumor control**

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

*Source: Office of the Governor*



onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at [www.chcc.gov.mp](http://www.chcc.gov.mp) or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit [www.governor.gov.mp](http://www.governor.gov.mp) and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at [www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19](http://www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19).

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Mostly Sunny	85 / 76 °F	
Palau	Partly Cloudy	86 / 77 °F	
Yap	Thunderstorms	84 / 78 °F	
Chuuk	Scattered Thunderstorms	84 / 79 °F	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	84 / 79 °F	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85 / 81 °F	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85 / 80 °F	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	06:45 AM	18:03 PM
Tuesday	6:45 AM	18:03 PM
Wednesday	06:46 AM	18:04 PM
Thursday	06:46 AM	18:04 PM
Friday	06:46 AM	18:05 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	00:13 PM	12:24 PM
Tuesday	-	01:01 PM	13:00 PM
Wednesday	-	01:50 PM	13:37 PM
Thursday	-	02:39 AM	14:17 PM
Friday	-	3:29 PM	15:00 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Cloudy	78 / 6 °F	
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	38 / 13 °F	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	68 / 59 °F	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	80 / 68 °F	
London	PM Showers	48 / 45 °F	
Los Angeles	Cloudy	70 / 47 °F	
Manila	Mostly Sunny	88 / 73 °F	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	82 / 66 °F	
Miami	Scattered Thunderstorms	78 / 67 °F	
New York	Partly Cloudy	29 / 14 °F	
Osaka	Sunny	55 / 39 °F	
Paris	Cloudy	44 / 30 °F	
Busan	Mostly Sunny	53 / 34 °F	
Rome	Partly Cloudy	52 / 41 °F	
Salem	Partly Cloudy	54 / 29 °F	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	59 / 43 °F	
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	39 / 15 °F	
Tokyo	AM Clouds/PM Sun	51 / 39 °F	
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	35 / 20 °F	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
01:23 AM	High Tide	1.11	
07:18 AM	Low Tide	0.46	
2:01 PM	High Tide	1.65	
9:17 PM	Low Tide	0.37	

## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
				UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6	7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4, 5	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6	TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

### FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM		3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
				2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

**NEWS DESK** For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235.3740. E-mail: [editor@saipantribune.com](mailto:editor@saipantribune.com). Website:[www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com).

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# CHCC updates rules on CHC visits, caregivers, ER patient admission

To ensure safer visitation rights for the patients of the Commonwealth Health Center, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. will be enforcing a revised visitation policy effective last Friday.

According to a news release CHCC issue on Jan. 7, 2022, all visitors, whether vaccinated (no testing required), or unvaccinated and with negative antigen test result, are allowed a maximum of 10 minutes visiting privileges for COVID-negative patients. "This policy is intended to protect our patients due to the current spread of COVID-19 in the community," the news release stated. Labor and Delivery, Obstetrics, and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit are excluded from this visitation limit (due to breastfeeding and bonding requirements for a newborn), as well as the Emergency Department.

Antigen test results for unvaccinated visitors are valid for 24 hours only. Should an unvaccinated visitor return after 24 hours to visit a patient, they will be retested and so on.

Additionally, family members or caregivers requested by patients needing moderate to maximum assistance during hospitalization should be fully vaccinated and have a negative antigen result before they are allowed into the room. Only one identified

caregiver will be allowed in the room the whole time. Switching of caregivers will not be allowed unless approved by the attending physician, must also be vaccinated, and tested negative on antigen testing.

Furthermore, all patients admitted due to reasons unrelated to COVID-19 (including pediatric and obstetrics patients) will be tested on a PCR COVID-19 testing platform on the third or fifth day of admission to ensure early COVID-19 detection, and that necessary precautions are taken and treatment of anti-viral medication is administered.

The visiting hours are 9am to 11am and 3pm to 5pm. All visitors are reminded to properly use face masks while in the facility. Hospital visiting hours must be adhered to and frequency of visits may be further limited on a case-by-case basis. If a patient has clinical reasons to be denied visitation rights (e.g., the patient is COVID-19 positive), specific policies related to the respective unit will apply.

For patients visiting the emergency room, a screening process for COVID-19 will take place. Symptomatic patients or patients with a recent high-risk COVID-19 exposure will be escorted to the Medical Care and Treatment Site for assessment,

while asymptomatic patients will be able to head straight into the waiting area for assessment. All patients will be treated accordingly. **(PR)**

Evelyne Tachibelmel and David Salapwa  
P.O. Box 505255, Saipan MP 96950  
Phone: 989-2685

Pro Se

## IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter )	
of the Petition )	
for the )	
Adoption of: )	FCD-AD
	CIVIL ACTION
E.D.K.R. )	NO.: 21-0376
Minor Children )	
By: )	NOTICE OF
Evelyne )	HEARING
Tachibelmel and )	
David Salapwa )	
Petitioners )	

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on February 23, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 217A before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 15th day of December, 2021.

Patrick V. Diaz  
Clerk of Court

/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



### INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-22-009

## PAU PAU BEACH 2-INCH WATERLINE EXTENSION PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Pau Pau Beach 2-Inch Waterline Extension, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general installation of a new main waterline and lateral service line; connection to the existing waterline; installation of gate valve assembly, existing lateral service tap relocation; restoration of existing asphalt concrete road; and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **180 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **January 13, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

**One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies** must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-22-009, Pau Pau Beach 2-Inch Waterline Extension Project"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 2, 2022**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 17, 2022** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org) with a copy to Mr. Joel H. Puyat, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email [joel.puyat@cucgov.org](mailto:joel.puyat@cucgov.org) and Mrs. Marcela Tenorio Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Assistant – via email [marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org](mailto:marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org).

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO  
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN  
Purchasing Administrator



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



### INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-22-015

## SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of heavy equipment for its fleet in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

**This project is funded from the United States Department of the Interior (US DOI), Office of the Insular Affairs (OIA).**

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

**One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies** must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-22-015, Supply and Delivery of Heavy Equipment"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 3, 2022** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 20, 2022**, to Manny B. Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator, via email [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org) with copies to Yvonne C. Ogumoro, CUC's Acting Water/Wastewater Division Manager via email at [yvonne.ogumoro@cucgov.org](mailto:yvonne.ogumoro@cucgov.org) and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician at [christie.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:christie.sablan@cucgov.org).

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO  
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN  
Purchasing Administrator



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

### Office of the Executive Director



### INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-22-013

#### Lower Base Sewer Phase 2 – Gravity Mains

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Lower Base Sewer Phase 2 – Gravity Mains in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The intent of the contract is for the Contractor to provide all labor, equipment, supplies and materials necessary to complete the scope of work which consists of the installation of sewer gravity mains, manholes, sewer laterals and connections to the new sewer system, connection to the existing sewer on Isa Drive, concrete encasement of new sewer mains, utility crossings, restoration of site pavement, temporary soil erosion control, temporary traffic control, and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the sewer and water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in **365 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

*The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.*

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **January 12, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

**One (1) original and Five (5) copies** of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-22-013, Lower Base Sewer Phase 2 – Gravity Mains"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 1, 2022**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one Hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on January 18, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org) with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address [nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org](mailto:nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org) and to Christie Sablan, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician – [christie.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:christie.sablan@cucgov.org).

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO  
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN  
Purchasing Administrator



# Business

## High court appears skeptical of Biden's workplace vaccine rule

WASHINGTON (AP)—Fully vaccinated and mostly masked, the Supreme Court's conservative majority appeared skeptical Friday of the Biden administration's authority to impose a vaccine-or-testing requirement on the nation's large employers. The court seemed more open to a separate vaccine mandate for most health care workers.

The arguments in the two cases come at a time of spiking coronavirus cases because of the omicron variant, and the decision Friday by seven justices to wear masks for the first time while hearing arguments reflected the new phase of the pandemic.

An eighth justice, Sonia Sotomayor, a diabetic since childhood, didn't even appear in the courtroom, choosing to remain in her office at the court and take part remotely. Two lawyers, representing Ohio and Louisiana, argued by telephone after recent positive COVID-19 tests, state officials said.

But the COVID circumstances did not appear to outweigh the views of the court's six conservatives

that the administration overstepped its authority in its vaccine-or-testing requirement for businesses with at least 100 employees.

"This is something the federal government has never done before," Chief Justice John Roberts said, casting doubt on the administration's argument that a half-century-established law, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, confers such broad authority.

Roberts and Justices Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett probably hold the key to the outcome in both cases, as they have been more receptive to state-level vaccine requirements than the other three conservative justices. Barrett and Kavanaugh also had tough questions for Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar, the administration's top Supreme Court lawyer.

The court's three liberal justices suggested support for the employer rule. Justice Elena Kagan said officials have shown "quite clearly that no other policy will prevent sickness and death to anywhere like the degree that this one will." And Justice

Stephen Breyer said he found it "unbelievable" that it could be in the "public interest" to put that rule on hold. He said that on Thursday there were some 750,000 new cases in the country and that hospitals are full.

Beginning Monday, unvaccinated employees in big companies are supposed to wear masks at work, unless the court blocks enforcement. But testing requirements and potential fines for employers don't kick in until February.

Legal challenges to the policies from Republican-led states and business groups are in their early stages, but the outcome at the high court probably will determine the fate of vaccine requirements affecting more than 80 million people.

Roberts, Kavanaugh and Barrett seemed to have fewer doubts about the health care vaccine mandate. Kavanaugh said it was a "very unusual situation" that hospitals and health care organizations affected by the regulation were "not here complaining" about the rule but instead support it. "What are we to make of that?" he asked.

## Virus testing shortages, delays fuel surge

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The difficulty finding coronavirus test kits in many parts of California and delays in getting results are causing increasing frustration and contributing to the surge of infections that in just two weeks more than doubled the number of people in hospitals with COVID-19.

Negative test results can be a necessity for any number of activities, from going to work to boarding an airplane or attending a sporting event. Delays in getting results—or inability to find a test kit—can mean people with very mild or no symptoms may presume they are not infected and go about their usual routines.

"If you are tested and you're positive then you know you need to isolate," said Abraar

Karan, an infectious diseases doctor at Stanford University. "If you can't get tested, and you don't have the luxury to just quarantine without knowing, sure, you may have people going out and infecting others."

The surge of cases in California has led to a soaring demand for tests that in many places simply can't be found. Some county mail-in testing programs have been halted due to exploding demand. In places where tests are available, people sometimes have to wait in line for several hours.

Gov. Gavin Newsom announced Friday that he is activating the California National Guard to add testing sites and boost capacity. More than 200 guard members are being de-

ployed to 50 sites to help with clinical staffing and crowd control, the governor said.

There's also been a lag in obtaining test results. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, an epidemiology professor at University of California, San Francisco's medical school, said she heard one lab was taking nine days to return results—longer than someone exposed to COVID-19 may have to quarantine.

"If you are trying to do the right thing, and you decided to wait in line to get a test, having a long time to get actionable information is not helpful," she said. "It's sort of absurd."

Some people have resorted to paying \$100 or more for a rapid result—something many can't afford.

## Nov. saw highest disbursement of rental aid

States and localities in November paid out the largest amount of rental assistance to cash-strapped tenants since a federal program began, the Treasury Department said in a statement Friday.

The \$2.9 billion paid out is the latest sign that the program's early hiccups have been mostly resolved and it is

now turning to helping those places running short of cash.

The latest figures show \$17.39 billion has been allocated to help cover back rent, putting the program on pace to pay out or allocate \$30 billion by the end of 2021. So far, there have been more than 3.1 million payments.

"We are just seeing that peo-

ple got their programs started, made them simpler and more efficient," Gene Sperling, who is charged with overseeing implementation of President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion coronavirus rescue package, said in an email interview. "A lot of places are moving fast and you are getting large amount of funds out quicker to renters in need." (AP)

# Nation

## Omicron explosion prompts nat'l breakdown of services

By JENNIFER SINCO  
KELLEHER & TERRY TANG  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ambulances in Kansas speed toward hospitals then suddenly change direction because hospitals are full. Employee shortages in New York City cause delays in trash and subway services and diminish the ranks of firefighters and emergency workers. Airport officials shut down security checkpoints at the biggest terminal in Phoenix and schools across the nation struggle to find teachers for their classrooms.

The current explosion of omicron-fueled coronavirus infections in the U.S. is causing a breakdown in basic functions and services—the latest illustration of how COVID-19 keeps upending life more than two years into the pandemic.

"This really does, I think, remind everyone of when COVID-19 first appeared and there were such major disruptions across every part of our normal life," said Tom Cotter, director of emergency response and preparedness at the global health nonprofit Project HOPE. "And the unfortunate reality is, there's no way of predicting what will happen next until we get our vaccination numbers—globally—up."

First responders, hospitals, schools and government



Los Angeles County Fire Department vehicles sit at a medical call Friday, Jan. 7, 2022, in Inglewood, Calif. AP

agencies have employed an all-hands-on-deck approach to keep the public safe, but they are worried how much longer they can keep it up.

In Kansas' Johnson County, paramedics are working 80 hours a week. Ambulances have frequently been forced to alter their course when the hospitals they're heading to tell them they're too overwhelmed to help, confusing the patients' already anxious family members driving behind them. When the ambulances arrive at hospitals, some of their emergency patients end up in waiting rooms because there are no beds.

Dr. Steve Stites, chief medical officer for the University of Kansas Hospital, said when the leader of a rural hospital had no place to send its dialysis patients this week, the hospital's

staff consulted a textbook and "tried to put in some catheters and figure out how to do it."

Medical facilities have been hit by a "double whammy," he said. The number of COVID-19 patients at the University of Kansas Hospital rose from 40 on Dec. 1 to 139 on Friday. At the same time, more than 900 employees have been sickened with COVID-19 or are awaiting test results—7% of the hospital's 13,500-person workforce.

"What my hope is and what we're going to cross our fingers around is that as it peaks ... maybe it'll have the same rapid fall we saw in South Africa," Stites said, referring to the swiftness with which the number of cases fell in that country. "We don't know that. That's just hope."

## Space telescope's 'golden eye' opens, last major hurdle

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)—NASA's new space telescope opened its huge, gold-plated, flower-shaped mirror Saturday, the final step in the observatory's dramatic unfurling.

The last portion of the 21-foot (6.5-meter) mirror swung into place at flight controllers' command, completing the unfolding of the James Webb Space Telescope.

"I'm emotional about it. What an amazing milestone. We see that beautiful pattern out there in the sky now," said Thomas Zurbuchen, chief of NASA's science missions.

More powerful than the Hubble Space Telescope, the \$10 billion Webb will scan the cosmos for light streaming from the first stars and galaxies formed 13.7 billion

years ago. To accomplish this, NASA had to outfit Webb with the largest and most sensitive mirror ever launched—its "golden eye," as scientists call it.

Webb is so big that it had to be folded origami-style to fit in the rocket that soared from South America two weeks ago. The riskiest operation occurred earlier in the week, when the tennis court-size sunshield unfurled, providing subzero shade for the mirror and infrared detectors.

Flight controllers in Baltimore began opening the primary mirror Friday, unfolding the left side like a drop-leaf table. The mood was even more upbeat Saturday, with peppy music filling the control room as the right side snapped into place. After applaud-

ing, the controllers immediately got back to work, latching everything down. They jumped to their feet, exchanged high-fives and cheered from behind masks when the operation was finally complete 2 1/2 hours later, doing their best to remain socially distant because of the global surge in COVID-19 cases.

"We have a deployed telescope on orbit, a magnificent telescope the likes of which the world has never seen," Zurbuchen said, congratulating the team. "So how does it feel to make history, everybody? You just did it."

His counterpart at the European Space Agency, astronomer Antonella Nota, noted that after years of preparation, the team made everything look "so amazingly easy."



# Asia

## Cold kills 22 stuck in cars in a Pakistan resort snowstorm

**ISLAMABAD** (AP)—At least 22 people, including 10 children, died in a popular mountain resort town in Pakistan after being stuck in their vehicles overnight during a heavy snowstorm as temperatures plummeted, officials said Saturday.

Most of the victims died of hypothermia, officials said. Among them was an Islamabad police officer and seven other members of his family, fellow police officer Atiq Ahmed said.

More than 4 feet (1 meter) of snow fell in the area of the Murree Hills resort overnight Friday and early Saturday, trapping thousands of cars on roadways, said Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed. The snow was so severe that heavy equipment brought in to clear it initially got stuck during the night, said Umar Maqbool, assistant commissioner for the town of Murree. Temperatures fell to minus 8 degrees Celsius (17.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

Officials called in paramilitary troops and a special military mountain unit to help. By late Saturday, thousands of vehicles had been pulled



In this photo provided by the Inter Services Public Relations, people walk past vehicles trapped in a heavy snowfall-hit area in Murree, some 28 miles (45 kilometers) north of the capital of Islamabad, Pakistan, Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022.

from the snow but more than a thousand were still stuck, Ahmed said.

Most roads leading to the area's resorts were largely cleared of snow by late Saturday, and military troops were working to clear the rest, Maqbool said. The military also converted army-run schools into relief camps where they provided shelter and food for the tourists who had been rescued.

Emergency officials distributed food and blankets to people while they were

trapped in their snowed-in vehicles, but many died of hypothermia. Others may have died from carbon monoxide poisoning after running their car heaters for long periods of time, said rescue services physician Abdur Rehman. As of late Saturday, the death toll included 10 men, 10 children and two women, Rehman said.

In one instance, a husband and wife and their two children all died in their car. In another, four young friends died together, he said.

## China's Tianjin testing all residents after omicron found

**BEIJING** (AP)—Tianjin, a major Chinese port city near the capital Beijing, began mass testing of its 14 million residents on Sunday after a cluster of 20 children and adults tested positive for COVID-19, including at least two with the omicron variant.

Those infected include 15 students from 8 to 13 years old, a staff member at an after-school center and four parents. The citywide testing is to be completed over two days.

China has stepped up its zero tolerance COVID-19 strategy in the run-up to the Winter Olympics, which open Feb. 4 in Beijing. The Chinese capital is 115 kilometers (70 miles) northwest of Tianjin and connected by a high-speed rail link that takes less than one hour.

Millions of people are being confined to their homes in Xi'an and Yuzhou, two other cities that are farther away but have larger outbreaks. The city of

Zhengzhou, a provincial capital 70 kilometers (40 miles) north of Yuzhou, is also conducting mass testing and closing schools starting Monday.

The first two cases confirmed in Tianjin were a 10-year-old girl and a 29-year-old woman working at the after-school center. Both were infected by the omicron variant. In subsequent testing of close contacts, 18 others tested positive and 767 tested negative as of Saturday night.

## Cambodia defends leader's trip to Myanmar

**PHNOM PENH, Cambodia** (AP)—Cambodia's foreign minister on Saturday defended Prime Minister Hun Sen's trip to Myanmar, the first by a foreign leader since the military takeover last year plunged the country into turmoil, though there was little evidence the mission yielded any immediate breakthrough.

Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn told reporters that talks between Hun Sen and Myanmar's leader achieved "a very good, positive result with a progressive step forward" on the implementation of peace efforts agreed to by the Association of Southeast Asian Na-

tions, a regional bloc currently led by Cambodia.

Hun Sen's meeting on Friday with Myanmar's military chief, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, who overthrew the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi last February, triggered protests in Myanmar and criticism abroad. Opponents said it legitimized the military takeover and broke the generals' near-total diplomatic isolation.

The military's seizure of power has led to widespread conflict with civilians forming guerrilla groups and thousands of people driven from their homes by army offensives.

"If there is anyone who op-

poses progressing these negotiations and the agreements like this, it is only those people who love war, those people who do not want to see Myanmar return to stability and peace," Prak Sokhonn, who is also ASEAN's special envoy to Myanmar, told reporters after returning home with Hun Sen from the 24-hour trip.

Friday's joint statement on the talks, which described them as "frank and candid," said Min Aung Hlaing was extending a cease-fire until the end of the year, and that both leaders would push for a meeting of stakeholders on delivering humanitarian aid.

# World

## WORLD BRIEFS

### Wall of rock falls on boaters on Brazilian lake, killing 6

**BRASILIA, Brazil** (AP)—A towering slab of rock broke from a cliff and toppled onto pleasure boaters drifting near a waterfall on a Brazilian lake Saturday and officials said at least six people died. Edgard Estevo, commander of the Minas Gerais State Fire Department, said at a news conference that in addition to the dead as many as 20 people might be missing and officials were seeking to identify them. Officials said at least 32 people were injured, though most had been released from hospitals by Saturday evening. Video images showed a gathering of small boats moving slowly near the sheer rock cliff on Furnas Lake when a fissure appeared in the rock and a huge piece toppled onto at least two of the vessels. Estevo said the accident occurred between the towns of Sao Jose da Barra and Capitolio, from which the boats had left.

### 56 inmates injured in Mexico prison riot over extortion

**MEXICO CITY** (AP)—A riot erupted inside a northern Mexico prison over prisoners trying to extort money from others and 56 inmates were injured, authorities said Saturday. Officials said the riot began Friday at the Apodaca prison, just outside the city of Monterrey. Aldo Fasci, the public safety secretary for Nuevo Leon state, said that the injuries were all caused by beatings and that no firearms were involved. "There were no firearms, all the injuries were caused by blows. The head wounds were caused by blunt objects, either rocks or in some cases by (smashing them) on the floor," Fasci said.

### UK gov't advisers recommend against 4th vaccine dose

**LONDON** (AP)—U.K. government advisers have recommended against giving a fourth dose of COVID-19 vaccine to nursing home residents and people over 80 because data shows that a third shot offers lasting protection against admission to the hospital. For people over 65, protection against hospitalization re-

mains at about 90% three months after the third dose, according to data compiled by the U.K. Health Security Agency. As a result, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunization on Friday advised the government that there was no need to offer a fourth dose, or second booster, to vulnerable people at this time. Instead, the government should focus on giving a third dose to as many people as possible to boost protection against the highly transmissible omicron variant.

### At least 16 killed in car crash in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula

**CAIRO** (AP)—A traffic accident Saturday involving a microbus and a larger bus left at least 16 people dead and 18 others injured in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, health officials said. The crash took place when a microbus collided with a public transportation bus on a road linking the city of Tor in southern Sinai to the city of Suez, the Health Ministry said in a statement. The collision happened 10 kilometers (about 6 miles) from Tor, police said. The Health Ministry said it deployed at least 13 ambulances to the scene and that the injured were taken to hospitals in southern Sinai.

### Tigray forces say Ethiopian airstrike kills 56 civilians

**NAIROBI, Kenya** (AP)—An airstrike in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region has killed at least 56 people at a camp for displaced people, a spokesman for the Tigray forces said Saturday, as the country's war continues despite the government's talk of reconciliation. "Another callous drone attack," Getachew Reda tweeted, saying the civilians had fled the conflict elsewhere in the region only to become the latest victims of recent airstrikes that have reportedly killed scores of people in Tigray. Spokespeople for Ethiopia's government and military did not respond to requests for comment on the airstrike, which could not be independently confirmed. Much of Tigray remains cut off from the world, with limited communications for humanitarian workers who have found their work severely

constrained by a months-long government blockade. Reports of the airstrike at the camp in Dedebeit in northwestern Tigray came a day after Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed issued a message of reconciliation for Orthodox Christmas after 14 months of war.

### Moderna gives Mexico 2.7 million shots as deaths top 300,000

**MEXICO CITY** (AP)—The U.S. company Moderna donated 2.7 million doses of coronavirus vaccine to Mexico Saturday as the country's official death toll topped 300,000. Mexico passed 300,000 test-confirmed coronavirus deaths this week, but so little testing is done in the country that a government review of death certificates puts to real toll at almost 460,000. Mexican officials welcomed the arrival of the shipment at the airport in Toluca, just west of Mexico City, and said the vaccines will be used to inoculate teachers. Teachers in Mexico were second after only health care workers to be vaccinated in the spring.

### Body of young child recovered off Greek island

**ATHENS, Greece** (AP)—The body of a young child was recovered from the Aegean Sea on Saturday, two weeks after two deadly accidents in the area involving boats loaded with migrants, Greek Coast Guard officials said. The body was found off the island of Naxos, and authorities estimated late Saturday that the victim, who was 85 centimeters (33.5 inches) tall, was about three years old. The body will be taken to the city of Piraeus, a port in the capital Athens, for forensic examination. On Thursday, four other bodies belonging to a man, a woman and two pre-teen girls were found, three off Naxos and one off the nearby island of Paros. On Dec. 22, 12 people, all believed to be from Iraq, were rescued from an inflatable dinghy off Folegandros in the southern Cyclades, 180 kilometers (112 miles) southeast of Athens. The bodies of three unidentified men were recovered from the sea. Survivors of that incident said that at least 17 others were missing.



# Life & Style

This advertorial  
is sponsored by



By KRISTINE NOLIN  
UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

A quick walk down the drink aisle of any corner store reveals the incredible ingenuity of food scientists in search of sweet flavors. In some drinks you'll find sugar. A diet soda might have an artificial or natural low-calorie sweetener. And found in nearly everything else is high fructose corn syrup, the king of U.S. sweetness.

I am a chemist who studies compounds found in nature, and I am also a lover of food. With confusing food labels claiming foods and beverages to be diet, zero-sugar or with "no artificial sweeteners," it can be confusing to know exactly what you are consuming.

So what are these sweet molecules? How can cane sugar and artificial sweeteners produce such similar flavors? First, it is helpful to understand how taste buds work.

## Taste buds and chemistry

The "taste map"—the idea that you taste different flavors on different parts of your tongue—is far from the truth. People are able to taste all flavors anywhere there are taste buds. So what's a taste bud?

Taste buds are areas on your tongue that contain dozens of taste receptor cells. These cells can detect the five flavors—sweet, sour, salty, bitter and umami. When you eat, food molecules are dissolved in saliva and then washed across the taste buds, where they bind to the different taste receptor cells. Only molecules with certain shapes can bind to certain receptors, and this produces the perception of different flavors.

Molecules that taste sweet bind to specific proteins on the taste receptor cells called G-proteins. When a molecule binds these G-proteins, it triggers a series of signals that are sent to the brain where it is interpreted as sweet.

## Natural sugars

Natural sugars are types of carbohydrates known as saccharides that are made of carbon, oxygen and hydrogen. You can imagine sugars as rings of carbon atoms with pairs of oxygen and hydrogen attached to the outside of the rings. The oxygen and hydrogen groups are what



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

With confusing food labels claiming foods and beverages to be diet, zero-sugar or with "no artificial sweeteners," it can be confusing to know exactly what you are consuming.

# Food chemist explains sweet science

make sugar sticky to the touch. They behave like Velcro, sticking to the oxygen and hydrogen pairs on other sugar molecules.

The simplest sugars are single-molecule sugars called monosaccharides. You've probably heard of some of these. Glucose is the most basic sugar and is mostly made by plants. Fructose is a sugar from fruit. Galactose is a sugar in milk.

Table sugar—or sucrose, which comes from sugar cane—is an example of a disaccharide, a compound made of two monosaccharides. Sucrose is formed when a glucose molecule and a fructose molecule join together. Other common disaccharides are lactose from milk and maltose, which comes from grains.

When these sugars are eaten, the body processes each of them slightly differently. But eventually they are broken down into molecules that your body converts into energy. The amount of energy from sugar—and all food—is measured in calories.

## High fructose corn syrup

High fructose corn syrup is a staple of U.S. foods, and this hybrid sugar sweetener needs a category all on its own. High fructose corn syrup is made from corn starch—the main carbohydrate found in corn. Corn starch is made of thousands of glucose molecules bonded together. At an industrial scale, the starch is broken into individual glucose molecules using enzymes. This glucose is then treated with a second enzyme to convert some of it into fructose. Generally, high fructose corn syrup is roughly 42%-55% fructose.

This blend is sweet and cheap to produce but has a high calorie content. As with other natural sugars, too much high fructose corn syrup is bad for your health. And since most processed foods and drinks are packed full of the stuff, it is easy to

consume too much.

## Natural nonsugar sweeteners

The second category of sweeteners could be defined as natural nonsugar sweeteners. These are food additives such as stevia and monk fruit, as well as natural sugar alcohols. These molecules aren't sugars, but they can still bind to the sweet receptors and therefore taste sweet.

Stevia is a molecule that comes from the leaves of the Stevia rebaudiana plant. It contains "sweet" molecules that are much larger than most sugars and have three glucose molecules attached to them. These molecules are 30 to 150 times sweeter than glucose itself. The sweet molecules from monk fruit are similar to stevia and 250 times sweeter than glucose.

## » What's the difference between sugar, other natural sweeteners and artificial sweeteners?

The human body has a really hard time breaking down both stevia and monk fruit. So even though they're both really sweet, you don't get any calories from eating them.

Sugar alcohols, like sorbitol, for example, are not as sweet as sucrose. They can be found in a variety of foods, including pineapples, mushrooms, carrots and seaweed, and are often added to diet drinks, sugar-free chewing gum and many other foods and drinks. Sugar alcohols are made of chains of carbon atoms instead of circles like normal sugars. While they are composed of the same atoms as the sugars, sugar alcohols are not absorbed well by the body so they are considered low-calorie sweeteners.

## Artificial sweeteners

The third way to make something sweet is to add artificial sweeteners. These chemicals are produced in labs and factories and are not found in nature. Like all things that taste sweet, they do so because they can bind to certain receptors in taste buds.

So far, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved six artificial sweeteners. The most well known are probably saccharin, aspartame and sucralose—better known as Splenda. Artificial sweeteners all have different chemical formulas. Some resemble natural sugars while others are radically different. They are usually many times sweeter than sugar—saccharin is an incredible 200 to 700 times sweeter than table sugar—and some of them are hard for the body to break down.

While a sweet dessert may be a simple pleasure for many, the chemistry of how your taste buds perceive sweetness is not so simple. Only molecules with the perfect combination of atoms taste sweet, but bodies deal with each of these molecules differently when it comes to calories.

*This article is part of a series examining sugar's effects on human health and culture. To see all articles on this series, click here. This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article here: <https://theconversation.com/whats-the-difference-between-sugar-other-natural-sweeteners-and-artificial-sweeteners-a-food-chemist-explains-sweet-science-172571>.*

## Healthy Living Want healthy gums?

Oleanolic acid, a chemical found in raisins, is particularly effective in killing oral bacteria.

### Eat raisins

• **Oleanolic acid** prevents the growth of two kinds of bacteria that can cause gum disease

• **It also prevents** bacteria from adhering to tooth surface and creating dental plaque



Source: University of Illinois, TNS Photo Service

# Mayo expert clears up confusion about COVID-19 boosters

By JASON HOWLAND  
MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated its recommendations for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to expand the use of a single booster dose to 12- to 15-year-olds.

"Everyone at age 12 and up is approved for a booster after they've completed their initial series," says Dr. Melanie Swift, co-chair of Mayo Clinic's COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation and Distribution Work Group.

What constitutes an initial series depends on the COVID-19 vaccine

you were given. If it was Johnson & Johnson, it's one shot. If it was an mRNA vaccine, which is Moderna or Pfizer, an initial series is two shots. And if you are immunocompromised and were vaccinated with Moderna or Pfizer, it's three shots.

"To keep it clear, just remember that it's your initial series, however many doses that is, and one booster for now," says Dr. Swift. "At least that is in the United States right now. And that's, with everything COVID, always subject to change."

"The timing of the booster depends upon the brand of your initial series. If you got Johnson & Johnson, it's two

months. If you got Pfizer initially, it's five months. If you got Moderna initially, it's six months. Now that might change in the future. But that's the current guidance based upon the available data," she says.

This comes at a time when the omicron variant is spreading rapidly across the nation. The U.S. recently hit a new pandemic high of over 300,000 average new daily cases of COVID-19. And COVID-19 hospitalizations are on the rise, as well.

"We know that one of the things about omicron is that it makes your vaccines less effective. The vaccination protection with two doses of an mRNA vaccine against omicron is

down in the 40-something percent range—so not great. But with a booster, that protection goes up over 75%," says Dr. Swift. "We know that in addition to the fact that your immunity just wanes over time, omicron, in particular, is more susceptible to your immune response after the third or booster dose. So we are really encouraging people to get that booster dose."

*Information in this post was accurate at the time of its posting. Due to the fluid nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, scientific understanding, along with guidelines and recommendations, may have changed since the original publication date.*



# Life & Style

## Irish singer Sinead O'Connor's 17-year-old son found dead

**LONDON** (AP)—Sinead O'Connor's 17-year-old son, Shane, was found dead in Ireland on Friday after the

Irish singer-songwriter notified authorities that he had gone missing.

Police said the missing per-

son case was closed after a body was found in the eastern coastal town of Bray, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of Dublin.

O'Connor posted on Twitter that her son, "the very light of my life, decided to end his earthly struggle today and is now with God. May he rest in peace and may no one follow his example. My baby, I love you so much. Please be at peace."

Earlier, the 55-year-old singer had appealed to her son on social media not to harm himself. She noted that he had been hospitalized following two suicide attempts.

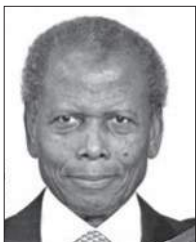
Shane was one of O'Connor's four children. His father was Irish musician

Donal Lunny.

O'Connor first became famous for her arresting 1990 cover of the Prince song "Nothing Compares 2 U." She emerged from an abusive family in Ireland and has been candid about her own struggles with mental illness.

## Oscar winner and groundbreaking star Sidney Poitier dies

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Sidney Poitier, the groundbreaking actor and enduring inspiration who transformed how Black people were portrayed on screen, and became the first Black actor to win an Academy Award for best lead performance and the first to be a top box-office draw, has died. He was 94.



Poitier

contemporary Harry Belafonte issued a statement Friday, remembering their extraordinary times together.

"For over 80 years, Sidney and I laughed, cried and made as much mischief as we could," he wrote. "He was truly my brother and partner in trying to make this world a

little better. He certainly made mine a whole lot better."

Poitier, winner of the best actor Oscar in 1964 for "Lilies of the Field," died Thursday at his home in Los Angeles, according to Latrae Rahming, the director of communications for the Prime Minister of Bahamas. His close friend and great

Few movie stars, Black or white, had such an influence both on and off the screen. Before Poitier, the son of Bahamian tomato farmers, no Black actor had a sustained career as a lead performer or could get

a film produced based on his own star power. Before Poitier, few Black actors were permitted a break from the stereotypes of bug-eyed servants and grinning entertainers. Before Poitier, Hollywood filmmakers rarely even attempted to tell a Black person's story.

Messages honoring and mourning Poitier flooded social media, with Oscar winner Morgan Freeman calling him "my inspiration, my guiding light, my friend" and Oprah Winfrey praising him as a "Friend. Brother. Confidant. Wisdom teacher." Former President Barack Obama cited his achievements and how he revealed "the power of movies to bring us closer together."

## Duchess of Cambridge, the reliable royal, turns 40

**LONDON** (AP)—At least there's Kate.

The Duchess of Cambridge, who turns 40 on Sunday, has emerged as Britain's reliable royal.

After Prince Harry and Meghan's stormy departure to California in 2020, the death of Prince Philip last year, and now sex abuse allegations against Prince Andrew, the former Kate Middleton remains in the public eye as the smiling mother of three who can comfort grieving parents at a children's hospice or wow the nation by playing piano during

a televised Christmas concert.

"This is the woman who was the commoner who married into the royal family and who has not tripped up, not caused any embarrassment," Katie Nicholl, author of "Kate: The Future Queen." "It's not been an easy year, and yet somehow Kate seems to be a bit of a beacon in all of this."

At a moment when the House of Windsor is facing more than its share of contro-

versy, Prince William's spouse has won accolades for her commitment to early education, art and music. The charities she supports gush about her willingness to get personally involved in their causes.



Middleton

Olivia Marks-Woldman was touched by the care Kate put into photographing Holocaust survivors Steven Frank and Yvonne Bernstein for an exhibition sponsored by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

## Jennifer Garner named Hasty Pudding Woman of the Year

**CAMBRIDGE, Mass.** (AP)—Jennifer Garner has been named Woman of the Year by Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatricals, based not just on her career as an actor, but also because of her record as a philanthropist and entrepreneur, the organization said Thursday.

Garner, 49, will be the guest of honor at a parade through Harvard Square, followed by a roast at which she will receive her pudding pot, the theater troupe said in a statement.

Hasty Pudding Theatricals,

which dates to 1844 and bills itself the third oldest theater group in the world, established its Woman of the Year award in 1951 to honor people who have made "lasting and impressive contributions to the world of entertainment." Last year's recipient was Viola Davis, and previous winners include Meryl Streep, Katharine Hepburn, Ethel Merman and Cher.

The date of the parade, Feb. 5, is also opening night for the group's latest performance.

"We are thrilled to honor

Jennifer Garner, who will be the first Woman of the Year to be honored on Opening Night," co-producer Molly Chiang said. "'13 Going on 30' was my go-to movie growing up, so I can't wait to meet her."

Garner was nominated for several Primetime Emmys for her role as Sydney Bristow in the television spy series "Alias." She has been lauded for her work in several movies including "Juno," "Dallas Buyers Club" and "13 Going on 30."

## Baldwin: It's a lie that he's not helping shooting probe

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Alec Baldwin said Saturday that any suggestion he's not complying with the investigation into last fall's deadly shooting on a New Mexico film set is a lie.

At issue is a search warrant for Baldwin's cell phone, which authorities hope can provide information helpful in the probe. Baldwin was holding a revolver during a rehearsal for his movie "Rust" on Oct. 21 when it

fired, killing cinematographer Halyna Hutchins and wounding the film's director.

Authorities still don't have the actor's phone.

Baldwin said in an Instagram message posted Saturday that New Mexico has to go through New York law enforcement and the process of specifying exactly what is needed takes time.

"They can't just go through your phone and take your photos, or your love letters to your wife, or what have

you," he said.

Baldwin has said he didn't know the gun he was holding contained a live round when it went off. Investigators are trying to find where the live round came from and, in the search warrant for Baldwin's phone, said they are looking for text messages, images, videos, calls or any other information related to the movie.

"Any suggestion that I am not complying with requests or orders or demands or search warrants about my phone, that's bull——, that's a lie," he said.

## Wedding invites sent only to family's female relatives

**DEAR ABBY:** My niece is getting married this spring, which has created a dilemma for my immediate family. When the save-the-date cards went out, she addressed them only to the women in the family. We thought it was a mistake at first, but now the invitations have arrived, and they are also addressed to the women only.

My husband and my son (her first cousin) feel slighted. My son's wife was invited, but she doesn't know the bride at all. It seems the bride has a limited number of guests she can invite for the venue. She also has a large number of friends and the groom's family attending.

Out of respect for my son and my husband—and a son-in-law who was also excluded—we all will respond that we will not attend. I feel terrible not being able to see my niece walk down the aisle, but I'm not used to my spouse being ignored. Am I doing the right thing?

PUZZLED IN FLORIDA

**DEAR PUZZLED:** Before you refuse the wedding invitation, call your niece and ask if she is intentionally excluding the men. Because women make most of the social arrangements, she may not have realized that EACH guest's name must appear on the invitation. Rather than an attempt to exclude family members because their chromosomes are not the same as hers, this may simply have been an etiquette boo-boo.

■■■

**DEAR ABBY:** I have been married for 35 years and have a recurring problem with no solution in sight. My wife sets frozen meat on the counter to thaw. She says she can't count on thawing it in the fridge because it takes too long and interferes with her meal planning. Her mother has always done it this way, and no one has ever gotten sick. I try talking to her but it only ends up in a fight. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

RISKY IN ILLINOIS

**DEAR RISKY:** The Food and Drug Administration has issued guidelines about food preparation because people have gotten VERY sick when it wasn't done properly. Over the last 10 or 15 years, conditions in some of our slaughterhouses and agricultural operations have deteriorated, and consumers have died because of it. Whether you can convince your wife to change her ways, I can't predict. But you might be doing her a favor if you visit [fda.gov](http://fda.gov) and print out some information for her and your mother-in-law. Better to be safe than sorry.

■■■

**DEAR ABBY:** My wife is part of a Christmas cookie exchange with her sisters-in-law and her mother. Three of them make beautiful, tasty cookies. The other one's cookies aren't very good, so the others don't put them on their trays. Instead, they happily accept them and then "give them away."

I believe someone should reach out to this woman and "gently" suggest she make a different kind of cookie so she isn't

## DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



wasting her time, energy and money. I have been told to stay out of it. Your thoughts?

WASTE OF COOKIES IN NEW YORK

**DEAR WASTE OF COOKIES:** Ideally, the woman might want to know that her cookie isn't well-liked. In the real world, however, her feelings might be hurt. You have been outvoted. Right now, everybody's happy. If the temptation to say something becomes overwhelming, put a "good" cookie in your mouth and keep it shut.

■■■

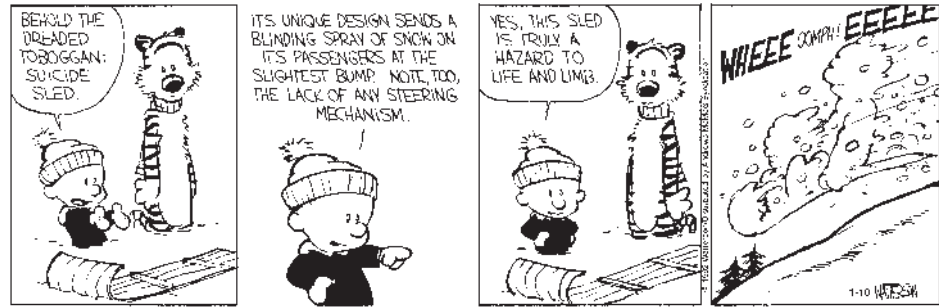
What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



## Garfield®

By Jim Davis



## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



## CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Pep  
4 "Get Here"  
9 Opposite of "post-"  
12 Equal (Pref.)  
13 Jeremy of "Entourage"  
14 Corn  
15 Prepaid convenience for cell users  
17 Texter's "Enough!"  
18 Common verb  
19 Spiritualist  
21 Oliver Twist, for one  
24 Cabinet dept. head  
25 "Norma"  
26 Snake's warning  
28 Mexican snacks  
31 Actor Richard  
33 UFO crew  
35 Com-manded

**DOWN**

36 Enticed  
38 Rep.'s rival  
40 "Diamonds"  
41 Goatee's spot  
43 "O Pioneers!"  
45 Long recliner  
47 Magic, on score-boards  
48 "A spider!"  
49 Cell user's practical joke  
54 Conk out  
55 Dodge  
56 Classic car  
57 Hosp. areas

**DOWN**

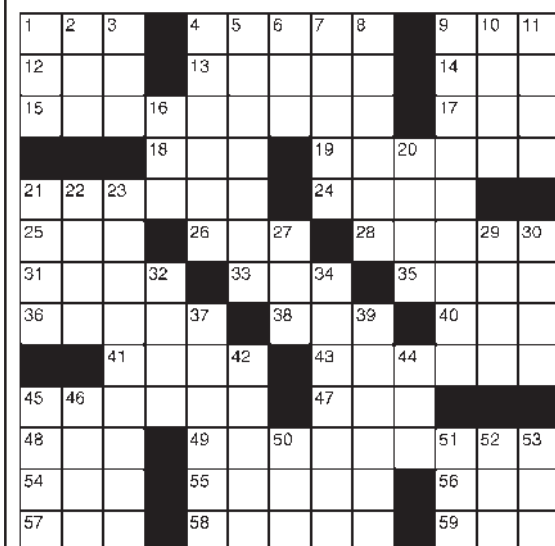
1 Red-carpet type  
2 "Kinda" suffix  
3 Cow's greeting  
4 Verdi works  
5 Permit  
6 Holly-wood's Gabor  
7 Semesters  
8 "Still..."  
9 Fund for minor expenses  
10 Male of "Bohemian Rhapsody"  
11 Guitarist Clapton

**16** "Unh-unh"  
**20** Wound cover  
**21** Pitcher Hersher  
**22** Pasta sauce brand  
**23** Fruity baked goods  
**27** Norm (Abbr.)  
**29** Garfield's pal  
**30** Blacken  
**32** Classic soda brand  
**34** Extra helpings  
**37** Put to rest  
**39** Grocery store  
**42** Audacity  
**44** Patient's need, briefly  
**45** Give up  
**46** Estate recipient  
**50** Bond rating  
**51** Canine cry  
**52** Zodiac feline  
**53** Arced tennis shot

**Solution time: 26 mins.**

L	U	G	P	S	A	W	A	R	E
A	P	O	A	R	A	P	E	N	A
I	S	I	W	A	I	E	D	O	F
R	E	D	K	I	T	E	S		
S	T	A	G	S	Y	D	A	M	P
L	O	R	N	E			E	N	D
S	H	O	R	P	A	S	T	E	
J	O	V	E	M	O	W	S	I	Z
C	A	L	L	E	D	O	F	O	B
A	B	E	A	M	E	T	A	S	R
N	A	A	C	P	S	S	R	E	A

Last Friday's Answer 01/10



## STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** Evan Handler, 61; Pat Benatar, 68; George Foreman, 73; Rod Stewart, 77.

**Happy Birthday:** Take a step back, look at the big picture, evaluate what's in the past, present and future. Understanding the process of moving forward requires recognizing what works for you. Face emotional issues head-on, clear up unfinished business and elect to move forward with a clean slate. A positive attitude will draw support and better results. Your numbers are 8, 14, 20, 28, 34, 38, 41.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** Put your energy and intelligence where they will bring the highest return. Implement change that gives you the boost you need to start something new and exciting. Don't be fooled by someone offering an exaggerated point of view. \*\*\*

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** Make new friends, participate in an event and do your part to influence others positively. The people you encounter will offer a different perspective on life, love and happiness. Personal growth is favored. \*\*\*

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Keep your thoughts to yourself. Sharing info before verifying facts will leave you subject to criticism, allow someone to copy you and take credit for your idea. A disciplined attitude will help finish what you start and reap the rewards. \*\*\*

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Expand your mind, stretch your imagination and reach out to someone who shares your sentiments. Working in tandem with someone who can pick up where you leave off will encourage you

to take a partnership to the next level. \*\*\*\*

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Know when to make a move. Study what everyone around you is doing, and sum up how best to use your skills and knowledge to surpass any competition you encounter along the way. There is money to be made. \*\*

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** You'll gain ground if you channel your energy where it will do the most. Don't waste time arguing or fighting a losing battle. Concentrate on the changes that will help you get ahead and encourage new beginnings. Romance is featured. \*\*\*\*

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Set your course and don't deviate. You'll encounter temptation along the way, but by sticking to your plan, you will make gains that surpass your expectations and leave a lasting impression. Refuse to let laziness cost you when physical action is required. \*\*\*

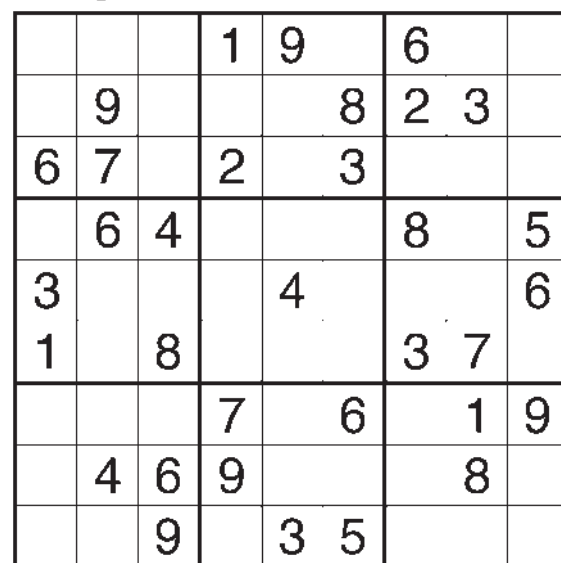
**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Do what you can. Your actions will speak louder than words. Your reputation depends on reliability, following through and not being afraid to do things differently. Change begins with you, so stop worrying about what others think and do what comes naturally. \*\*\*

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Do something to satisfy your needs. Engage in activities that require mental, physical and emotional input. Touching base with people who share your beliefs and goals will encourage you to use your skills to make a difference. \*\*\*\*

## SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



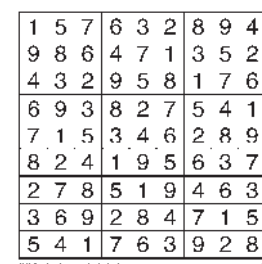
Difficulty Level ★

1/10

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer



## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Deal with friends, relatives and colleagues with respect, and you'll avoid an emotional scene. If you want to make a change, be sure to have your facts and figures straight before proceeding. Make choices clear in order to avoid interference. \*\*



**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Look at every detail and possibility before discussing your concerns. Don't overreact or make assumptions when dealing with sensitive situations or authoritative people. Bide your time, and pay attention to how others react and what they reveal. \*\*\*\*



**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Size up a situation before you proceed. If force is required, it's better to take a pass. Focus more on personal gain and how best to use your skills to make a difference or get ahead. A show of affection will brighten your day. \*\*\*\*

**Birthday Baby:** You are prompt, dedicated and helpful. You are flexible and proactive.

☾ Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼ You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼ Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼ Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼ Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

## WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

NOTABLE MONSTERS

Solution: 8 letters

N B E A S T S N L L O R T D W  
A I E M L I F O E V F E A I E  
M G E E M P R M G A A P Z U R  
Y F N T T Y Y E E S I A I Q E  
E O A E S L M D N U R E R S W  
G O T A K N E M D D Y R Y A O  
O T I L I A E J U E V I L L  
B S T L N T R K U M R U E I F  
N P B I G G E K N I C F W E O  
O O L Z K B H Y R A C A I N L  
G L L D O F O O R A R E T O K  
A C I O N A G D S L H F C I L  
R Y K G G U R P O T S S H N O  
D C L O W N E C H U C K Y I R  
S P I D E R K R U E G E R M E

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1/10

Allen, Beasts, Beetlejuice, Big Foot, Bogeyman, Book, Casper, Chucky, Clown, Cyclops, Demon, Dracula, Dragon, Evil, Fairy, Faun, Film, Fly, Folklore, Frankenstein, Freddy, Ghost, Goblin, Godzilla, Kill, King Kong, Kraken, Krueger, Legend, Medusa, Minion, Mummy, Ogre, Reaper, Shark, Siren, Spider, Squid, Titan, Troll, Warlock, Werewolf, Witch, Wizard, Yeti

Last Friday's Answer: All You Can Eat

To purchase WONDERWORD books.

visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.



# Heat ride hot shooting to 123-100 win over the Suns



**PHOENIX (AP)**—Tyler Herro had his best scoring game of the season. Duncan Robinson did, too.

It all added up to a blowout win for the Miami Heat, who tied a franchise record with 22 3-pointers in a 123-100 victory over the NBA-leading Phoenix Suns on Saturday night.

Herro poured in 33 points while Robinson added 27. Both players came off the bench for the short-handed Heat, who had 11 players on the inactive list, including star guard Jimmy Butler.

"I just really continue to commend our group for staying in the moment, focusing on solutions and figuring out a way to improve and play good enough to win," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "One at a time."

The Heat made 50% of their 44 attempts from 3-point range. Robinson had a particularly good night, making eight 3s on 16 attempts, including a pair in the fourth quarter that turned back a short-lived Suns rally.

"We've got a lot of guys who can really shoot, which obviously helps," Robinson said. "Sometimes shooting is contagious as well. Certainly ball movement is contagious."

"Ball's finding energy. Ball's finding the open guy."

Herro had a stellar all-around game, making 12 of 20 shots, including three 3-pointers. He added five rebounds and three assists. The 21-year-old is averaging more than 20 points this season despite starting just 10 games.

"He just got into a great rhythm," Spoelstra said.

The thin roster didn't stop Miami from a strong start. The Heat shot 52% in the first quarter and took a 33-29 lead.

They were even better in the second quarter and pushed ahead 71-50 by the break. Robinson scored 18 points off the bench, all on six 3-pointers. Herro added 17 points. Miami was 15 of 30 from 3-point range in the first half and the bench scored 40 points.

Miami cooled off a little in the second half but the game never got particularly close. The Suns had their three-game winning streak snapped in a rare home blowout loss.

It was a tough night in all phases for the Suns, who came into the game with the NBA's best record but didn't play like it. They struggled to produce consistently on offense and let the Heat's shooters get way too many wide-open looks on defense.

Devin Booker led the Suns with 26 points while Mikal Bridges added 20. The Suns shot just 38% from the field and were outrebounded 49-



Miami Heat's Tyler Herro (14) drives around Phoenix Suns' Cameron Payne during the first half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022, in Phoenix.

35. Booker said he was more upset that the Heat didn't face much resistance from the Suns' defense.

"I think they came out way too comfortable," Booker said. "That is not a team you want to give some confidence

in and let them see a couple of easy ones go in. It was too loose. They got to do whatever they wanted."

## **Pacers 125, Jazz 113**

In Indianapolis, Domantas Sabonis scored a career-high 42

points on 18-of-22 shooting to help the Indiana Pacers beat the Utah Jazz 125-113 on Saturday night.

Lance Stephenson added 16 points, 14 assists and four steals off the bench. Duane Washington Jr. also had 16

points, and Justin Holiday 15.

Donovan Mitchell led Utah with 36 points and nine assists. Bojan Bogdanovic scored 21 points.

The Pacers snapped a six-game losing streak and completed a season sweep of the Jazz.

## Memphis' Jenkins enters protocols, 14th NBA coach to do so

By **TIM REYNOLDS**  
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

Memphis assistant Brad Jones walked into what he thought was the Grizzlies' locker room in Brooklyn a few days ago, then wondered if he was in the right place.

There was only one other person in the room — and Jones had no idea who the person was.

"Am I in Brooklyn's locker room?" Jones asked.

Turns out, he was in the right place. The other person in the room was a 7-foot-1 rookie named Jon Teske, who had just been signed to a 10-day contract as the Grizzlies tried to fill roster holes created by having players lost for various COVID-19-related reasons.

Such is life in the NBA these days, with constant roster shakeups — and, as Jones learned from a text message he read upon waking up at 7:15 a.m. Saturday, shakeups to coaching staffs as well. He was serving as interim coach for the Grizzlies' game against the Los Angeles Clippers after Memphis coach Taylor Jenkins went into the league's health and safety protocols Saturday morning.

Jenkins became the 14th head coach in the 30-team league to miss time in recent weeks because of a virus-related issue, a figure that doesn't include numerous assistant coaches, other team staff and about 300 players.

The other head coaches to have done a protocols stint this season: Indiana's Rick Carlisle, Sacramento's Alvin Gentry, Phoenix's Monty Williams, Philadelphia's Doc Rivers, the Los Angeles Lakers' Frank Vogel, the Los Angeles Clippers' Tyrone Lue, Denver's Michael Malone, Portland's Chauncey Billups, Chicago's Billy Donovan, Milwaukee's Mike Budenholzer, Atlanta's Nate McMillan, Dallas' Jason Kidd and Oklahoma City's Mark Daigneault.

"I had COVID, but no symptoms," said Daigneault, who returned to the Thunder on Friday. "I was actually really contagious, based on my COVID levels, and yet asymptomatic, which gave me a very tangible example of how this thing spreads so quickly. If I was just not in a testing protocol like we are I wouldn't have thought to test, and yet I would have

been breathing all over everybody."

Also in the protocols and unable to play Saturday: Grizzlies center Steven Adams, who was the only Memphis player to appear in the team's first 40 games this season and who entered the day as one of only 17 players around the league to not miss a game yet in the 2021-22 campaign.

"Yes, we have to plan when we find out that so-and-so's got COVID or so-and-so's got an injury," Jones said. "Who's the next man up, blah blah blah. ... It's a challenging time, obviously."

And the Grizzlies already have a sense of how to navigate a game without Jenkins, who had to miss a recent Memphis contest because of a death in his family. Jenkins was fully involved in Saturday's game plan, Jones said, noting they spoke several times that morning alone.

"Hopefully, other than a different-looking, uglier guy, older guy on the sidelines, you guys won't notice any difference with what's going on out there," Jones said.

The number of players in the protocols has dropped considerably in recent days,

from around 125 during the last week of December to around 50 on Saturday. Numbers still change rapidly and some players on the list are closer to a return than others, plus the league has shortened the amount of time that some players need to spend in isolation after testing positive.

But the league—with 97% of its players known to be vaccinated, at least 65% known to be boosted and with 100% of its head coaches vaccinated—is hoping the worst of this surge might be over. No games have been postponed in more than a week, after 11 had to be pushed back between Dec. 14 and Dec. 30.

The league entered Saturday with 584 players having gotten into at least one game this season, 44 more than the previous record for any full season — and this one isn't even half over.

"The NBA has done a great job of navigating this," Jones said. "Obviously this caught not just the NBA but the whole world off-guard. We're going to look back on this in a few years ... we've been through a lot of crazy times, but this last month has been nuts."

## **Hornets 114, Bucks 106**

In Charlotte, N.C., Terry Rozier scored 28 points, Miles Bridges added 21 points and eight rebounds and Charlotte beat Milwaukee, handing the defending NBA champions their third loss in four games.

LaMelo Ball added 19 points, nine rebounds and eight assists for the Hornets. They held Milwaukee to 38.9% shooting on the Bucks' second road game in two nights.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 43 points and 12 rebounds, and Khris Middleton added 27 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists for Milwaukee.

The teams will meet again Monday night in Charlotte.

## **Celtics 99, Knicks 75**

In Boston, Jaylen Brown had 22 points, 11 assists and 11 rebounds for his first career triple-double, Jayson Tatum scored 19 points and Boston beat New York.

Josh Richardson had 17 points and Robert Williams finished with 12 points, seven rebounds and four blocks for the Celtics, who split the home-and-home series after the Knicks rallied from 25 points down Thursday night in New York.

RJ Barrett had 19 points, and Julius Randle added 13 points and 12 rebounds for the Knicks.

## **Grizzlies 123, Clippers 108**

In Los Angeles, Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 26 points, Desmond Bane added 23 and Memphis tied a franchise record with its eighth straight victory, beating Los Angeles.

It is the fifth time in Memphis' history and first since 2015 it has won eight straight. The Grizzlies were without star point guard Ja Morant because of left thigh soreness. They also were without coach Taylor Jenkins after he entered health and safety protocols.

Marcus Morris Sr. had 29 points for the Clippers. They've lost three straight and four of their last five to fall two games under .500 at 19-21.

## **Pistons 97, Magic 92**

In Detroit, Trey Lyles scored eight of his 16 points in the fourth quarter and Detroit won for the third time in five games, beating the Orlando t in a matchup of the NBA's two worst teams.

Hamadou Diallo added 17 points, and Saddiq Bey had 16. Lyles also had 13 rebounds. Detroit improved to 8-30.

Gary Harris had a season-high 28 points for the Magic. They have lost eight straight to fall to 7-33.



# Prescott throws 5 TD passes in Cowboys' romp over Eagles



**PHILADELPHIA (AP)**—Dak Prescott ran into Dallas' locker room with a message for any NFC team he'll play next week in the playoffs.

"The real (stuff) starts," he said.

It starts with finding out the Cowboys' wild-card opponent, and Prescott will be like millions of football fans every Sunday and watch the scoreboard with their playoff fate at stake. Prescott threw a career-high five touchdown passes against Philadelphia Eagles backups, Cedrick Wilson and Dalton Schultz each had two scoring catches and the Cowboys kept their slim hopes for a No. 2 seed in the NFC playoffs alive with a 51-26 victory Saturday night.

The Cowboys still had seeding to play for against an Eagles team that rested Jalen Hurts and other key starters ahead of an NFC wild-card game next week.

The NFC East champion Cowboys (12-5) need losses Sunday by reigning Super Bowl champion Tampa Bay against last-place Carolina and also for the Los Angeles Rams and Arizona Cardinals to lose to earn the No. 2 seed. There also is a path to the No. 3 seed for Dallas.

The Cowboys can't finish worse than the fourth seed. The Eagles (9-8) could still be the sixth seed.

Prescott stayed in the game until the fourth quarter, the lead increasing seemingly with each throw and so, perhaps, the risk of injury for a QB nearly 15 months removed from the



Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Cedrick Wilson catches a pass over Philadelphia Eagles defensive back Andre Chachere to score a touchdown during the first half of an NFL football game, Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022, in Philadelphia. AP

gruesome compound fracture of his right ankle that ended his 2020 season.

Prescott did his best to get an offense that routinely produced at least 400 yards during a 6-1 start back on track headed into the playoffs following a two-year absence. He was 21 of 27 for 295 yards and no interceptions.

"It's a hell of a year for a guy that was in as slump," coach Mike McCarthy deadpanned.

He came out unscathed — and with the Cowboys' record for touchdown passes in a season with 37. Tony Romo threw 36 in 2007. Prescott threw an 8-yard touchdown pass to Corey Clement early in the fourth quarter to make it 37-20 and set

the mark and, mercifully for the Eagles, get him out of the game.

His teammates knew Prescott set the TD mark. Prescott needed a reminder of his record.

"Just coming off the field, they're saying congrats and I thought they were saying congrats for five touchdowns," Prescott said.

Of course, Prescott got his record in the 17th game this season.

Staying sharp, piling up points, and, yes, finishing 6-0 in the NFC East were all needed high points for the Cowboys.

But, like the team records on both sides that kept falling, the win comes with a bit of a shrug. With nothing to play for,

the Eagles treated the game like a preseason finale. Hurts, with 3,144 yards passing and a team-high 784 yards rushing, got the night off. So did tackle Lane Johnson, cornerback Darius Slay and 11 more players on the reserve/COVID-19 list.

Gardner Minshew started for Hurts and — for a drive, at least — it was Minshew Mania again when he threw a 3-yard touchdown pass to Tyree Jackson on the opening drive. It was the first catch of Jackson's career.

The score sparked an "E-A-G-L-E-S!" chant from fans across the street at the Flyers game after a replay was shown on the big screen.

Philadelphia didn't give anyone in green much reason to chant and cheer the rest of the game. Eagles coach Nick Sirianni defended his decision to rest Hurts, who missed a game this year with a sprained left ankle, ahead of the playoffs.

"We thought it was an opportunity to get him back to 100%. We need to be able to have our full arsenal of offense going into the playoffs," Sirianni said.

Prescott sucked the energy out of the stadium early. He hit Wilson for TD receptions of 14 and 24 yards in the first half and then connected with Schultz twice over the final 1:45 of the half for a 30-17 lead. Schultz became only the fifth player since 2000 to catch two touch-

down passes inside the final 2 minutes of the first half.

Already a sparse crowd because of the low stakes and lower temperatures, Eagles fans fled for the exits at the half.

## STREAK IN TACT

Eagles center Jason Kelce played one snap to extend his streak to 122 games played, the longest active streak among centers.

## RECORD BREAKERS

The Eagles also started wide receiver DeVonta Smith as he chased DeSean Jackson for most yards receiving by a rookie in team history. He entered 38 yards shy and the Eagles tried to get him the record in a hurry. His first two receptions were for 25 and 12 yards — that's just 37. He had a 4-yard reception late in the first quarter to set the record with 916 yards and he then hit the bench.

"I wasn't even worried about it, but once it happened, everybody being around me, congratulating me, just kind of felt good," Smith said.

The Eagles set a franchise record for rushing yards in a single season. The Cowboys set a franchise record for most points in a season. Ezekiel Elliott reached 1,000 yards rushing for the Cowboys for the fourth time.

Ito Smith and JaQuan Hardy scored in the fourth quarter to help the Cowboys set an NFL record for the most players to score a touchdown in a single season at 22.

The milestones were reached with the benefit of the extra game.

## Bolton's fumble return sparks Chiefs' 28-24 win over Broncos

**DENVER (AP)**—Nearly stumbling heading into the playoffs, Nick Bolton and the Kansas City Chiefs gathered themselves just in time to thunder into the postseason with an AFC-best 12 wins.

They'll learn Sunday if that's enough to get them a first-round bye.

"We're ready to go wherever and against whomever," Patrick Mahomes said after the Chiefs rallied for a 28-24 win Saturday over the Denver Broncos, a victory powered by Bolton's 86-yard fumble return midway through the fourth quarter.

To secure the pole position in the AFC playoffs, the Chiefs (12-5) need Houston to upset the Tennessee on Sunday. If not, Kansas City hosts a wild-card game next weekend in its quest to reach a third consecutive Super Bowl.

The Broncos were ahead 21-20 and driving for another score when Melvin Ingram III blitzed, speeding past tight

end Noah Fant untouched and blowing up the play just as Drew Lock handed the ball to Melvin Gordon on second-and-2 from the 9.

Bolton, a rookie linebacker who checks in at 237 pounds, scooped up the loose ball and rumbled down the Chiefs' euphoric sideline, nearly falling down at mid-field before regaining his balance and outracing Lock, whom he played with at Missouri, to the end zone.

"I was hoping that he wouldn't stumble," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said after his 250th NFL coaching victory, including playoffs. "Those guys don't get much of a chance to run that far that fast very often and he ran like a stallion. He took off and looked like a running back there."

Like many of the other victories in the Chiefs' 13-game winning streak against Denver, this one was no cakewalk. The Broncos (7-10) led for much of the afternoon de-

spite having nothing to play for but pride.

"My main emotion is really proud of our payers," Broncos coach Vic Fangio said. "That's a team that may win it all. They've obviously won a lot of games the last four or five years since Mahomes has taken over. We had a chance to win that game. But not winning it is the bottom line and we didn't get it done."

The Broncos' last win over Kansas City came on Sept. 17, 2015.

"I love the way our defense buckled down," Reid said. "All in all, a good win and an important win for the Kansas City Chiefs and we'll see what we have by tomorrow night, who we're playing. We sure look forward to bringing back a playoff game back to Arrowhead in front of our fans."

Wide receiver Tyreek Hill could surely use the week off that goes to the top seed in each conference. He injured a heel in pregame

warmups and was held to one catch for 2 yards. With Hill hurting, Mecole Hardman stepped up with eight catches for 103 yards.

"No one is Tyreek. He's a special player that has never been seen in this league," Mahomes said. "But Mecole is pretty close. ... He was prepared for this moment."

After Mahomes scored a 2-point conversion following Bolton's touchdown to give the Chiefs a seven-point lead, the Broncos quickly drove downfield again but settled for Brandon McManus' chip shot field goal rather than going for it on fourth-and-9 from the 13.

The crowd booed the decision, but Fangio explained that even though the field goal left them needing a touchdown, at least it kept their hopes alive.

All they had to do was stop Mahomes, something they'd managed to do twice in Kansas City's six drives excluding the final posses-

sion of the first half when the Chiefs got the ball at their 15 with 23 seconds remaining.

The Chiefs, however, chewed up the final 4:37 and lined up in victory formation after the 2-minute warning as the crowd of 61,441 — there were nearly 15,000 empty seats — streamed for the exits, a fifth straight losing season in the books and the Broncos' playoff drought now stretched to six years.

## CHANNELING TEBOW

Lock completed just 4 of 10 passes for 27 yards in the first half but the Broncos took a 14-10 halftime lead thanks to Lock's touchdown scrambles of 5 and 23 yards, which made him the first Broncos quarterback with two touchdown runs in a game since Tim Tebow in 2011.

"Definitely not designed runs," said Lock, who lost all three of his starts after Teddy Bridgewater sustained a concussion against Cincinnati on Dec. 19.

## HOME UNDERDOGS

The Chiefs were 11-point fa-

vorites according to FanDuel SportsBook marking just the third time in the last 42 years that the Broncos were double-digit home underdogs.

## FANGIO'S FUTURE

Fangio got emotional in his postgame news conference but said he hadn't heard if he'd be back for the fourth year on his contract.

"You saw it out there tonight, a bunch of fighters and competitors," Fangio said after the Broncos' fourth straight loss dropped his record to 19-30. "And I think you saw it all year. And that's what these guys are. I'm proud to be associated with them. I'm not proud of our record. I know it's not good enough. I get it. But I'm proud to be associated with our players."

## INJURIES

Chiefs RB Darrel Williams (toe) left early in the fourth quarter. Broncos RT Bobby Massie was added to the injury report Saturday with a concussion and was ruled out.



# Guam's Low is second winner of Serve-ing Pacific

Congratulations to Badminton Oceania's second Serve-ing Pacific winner, Sandra Low, from Guam.

She was nominated for excelling in LEADERSHIP—one of the five organizational values which Badminton Oceania embeds across all program areas.

Serve-ing Pacific is Badminton Oceania's volunteer recognition scheme, acknowledging the hard work and commitment of volunteers across Oceania as we work towards a common goal of making badminton accessible to all.

Testament to her knowledge surrounding sport development and leadership, Low was approached to act as the president of Guam National Badminton Federation 12 years ago, despite having no previous knowledge of badminton. Nowadays, she is the face of badminton in Guam, with her perseverance and dedication allowing the sport to continuously grow and gain popularity.

Low plays a key role in the promotion and development of badminton. One of her biggest contributions to the sport is her impressive networking skills and her ability to liaise with schools across the country to incorporate badminton into their Physical Education curriculum and getting more teachers to attend Shuttle Time teacher training. The grassroots sports program (Shuttle Time) has been fundamental to the growth of sport in country, with more



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Guam National Badminton Federation's Sandra Low, left, was named the winner of the Badminton Oceania's Serve-ing Pacific award, the association's volunteer recognition scheme.

players progressing through the ranks to attend the likes of Pacific Games and VICTOR Oceania Championships. Currently, Low has her eyes set on forming a team to compete in this year's Northern Marianas 2022 Pacific Mini Games.

Other key accomplishments for Low include:

- Leading Team Guam to compete in the Gold Coast 2017 Sudirman Cup

- Signing an Memorandum Of Understanding with Spe-

cial Olympics Guam for the inclusion of Badminton as one of the key sports for Special Olympics

- Developing excellent working rapport with neighbouring country, Northern Marianas and their badminton association

- Hosting tournaments among Northern Marianas and Philippines Badminton Club.

"Working with Sandra for over 12 years, I can attest to

her great leadership and commitment for our badminton federation. Despite many setbacks and challenges she never give up and can always be counted on. Badminton is synonymous with Sandra and without her there will be no badminton in Guam", says Sunardi Li, Secretary General of Guam National Badminton Federation.

Low's personal highlights include finding a new passion which she took up on herself

to both participate and volunteer, while also encouraging her friends to get involved too. Moreover, with a strong desire to combat the "sedentary lifestyles" which many children lead nowadays, Low is on a mission to make badminton an option for children in Guam to find a great sense of pride, among several other transferable skills offered by sports.

"There is a great group of people in badminton, so I re-

ally enjoy being a part of that. From the Oceania level, down to the community, I can always see the love and the passion for the sport. We are getting a new badminton-specific facility which will allow us to run many more programs."

"I always believe there is a sport for every child... That is my goal with badminton and children, to offer badminton as a choice as an option to undertake, excel and gives them a sense of pride," said Low.

As mentioned by Low, another cause for celebration at the start of 2022 is the near completion of 'Guam Badminton Sports Centre' in Barigada. The 10,000 square foot facility will house seven badminton courts which adhere to Badminton World Federation standards.

Once again, Badminton Oceania thanks Low for her ongoing work and her commitment to upholding our values, particularly leadership, and we wish the entire team all success in their future endeavors at their new sports center.

The prize for each winner in Serve-ing Pacific is a local lunch voucher which Low and a guest can use to support local. Additionally, she will be the second to enter the random six-monthly draw (including the other six winners) for the ultimate staycation prize, which will be drawn in May 2022.

Keep your eyes peeled at the beginning of February 2022 to find out who the next winner is. (PR)

## SBL'S

From Page 20

We wish him the best. Hopefully things change in the immediate future so he can maybe help us in the Pacific Mini Games."

Santos said Attao was supposed to serve as sports manager of baseball for the 2022 Pacific Mini Games the CNMI will be hosting for the first

time ever this year.

"We need a replacement for him soon. Some other board members might step up and take on that role. Will figure it out in the next day or two," he said.

Attao said despite stepping away temporarily from the sport he loves, he's confident that the SBL will successfully organize the baseball event of the 2022 Mini Games and that

the national team will make their home islands proud on the field.

"I have complete faith in the abilities, skills, and capabilities of our CNMI baseball players and program. There are so many excellent ball players. All those who tried out and those final 20 selected should be proud to be a part of history. I encourage them to support each other

and help win the CNMI a gold medal!"

With Attao's departure, Santos called on anyone from CNMI's baseball-loving community to volunteer as a board member of the SBL.

"We're looking for someone who might be interested in serving the SBL board of directors. We have no candidates we hope to find someone sooner than later."

## COACH

From Page 20

himself and also to encourage his players in the CNMI national soccer team.

He said Sunjoon Tenorio, Joshua Abragan, and Guine Borja were recently on island and also took part in other sports events while vacationing for Christmas as a form of cross training.

Mita though admitted that competing in the duathlon was not a piece of cake as he was coming off an injury. And that's why he enjoyed the bike split of the competition the most.

The CNMI national soccer coach also congratulated all the winners and participants of the 6th Saipan Duathlon for encouraging each other to compete and pushing each other to get better.

He also had kind words to say to Triathlon Association of the CNMI for holding the event despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wilson, for her part, was the first in the women's solo division in a time of 1:14:36. She finished ahead of Ayano Braxton and multi-sport wunderkind Kaithlyn Chavez who came in at 1:18:07 and 1:19:32, respectively.

The women's solo winner said she thoroughly enjoyed her first ever duathlon on Saipan.

"It was really fun. I was pretty windy today. I'm fairly new here but it was super cool to see the community come out," she said.

The 32-year-old employee of a software company in Seattle said she enjoyed the bike split of last Saturday's duathlon.

"I enjoyed the bike the most, especially the downwind part. I just love bikes," she said.

Wilson is looking forward to joining other biking and running events in the future. She was also part of Baby Got

Back, the winning team in the 2021 Christmas Island Relay.

"Hope to join other events in the future. It's super fun!"

Results of the men's, women's, and mixed relay divisions of TRAC's 6th Saipan Duathlon will be published in the following issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

Proceeds from TRAC's 6th Saipan Duathlon will go to the sport federation's preparations for the triathlon event of this year's Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 that the CNMI will be hosting for the very first time.

The 6th Saipan Duathlon was sponsored by IT&E.

## KETOLA

From Page 20

out alright, Ketola said the time he registered was a full minute slower than his best time.

"My favorite event is the 1,500m and my personal best is 3:52 from college. I don't expect that I will ever beat that time again."

A former NCAA Division III runner from St. Olaf College, Ketola recently was hailed the king of the local 1-mile race after winning the 1 Mile Road Race last Dec. 31.

He ran that in 4:45, still a far off from his best mile run of 4:12.

Ketola said since arriving last September he has really been embraced by the island's very active running community.

"Everyone I've met through running has been awesome. It's been great with them putting on these meets and races. It's not east to host these events but everything has been fantastic. Shout out to Ed from Run Saipan."

He added that he'll certainly try to take part in all of the running events of Run Saipan and NMA.

"I'm looking forward to better times in future meets but I'm also only running once or twice a week now since I also train jiu-jitsu at Trench Tech."

Last October, Oceania Athletics announced it will be conducting its regional championships online through the 2021 Oceania Athletics Virtual Championships.

"With the world, and especially the Pacific feeling the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic, it has meant that it is now, over two years, since we have been able to gather as an Oceania Athletics family in person," said Oceania Athletics.

It said the 2021 Oceania Athletics Virtual Championships would allow athletes of all ages and abilities to compete, albeit virtually, for medals and to be crowned Oceania Virtual Champion.

The 2021 Oceania Athletics Virtual Championships was held in partnership with Oceania Masters Athletics Association and saw champions crowned and medals awarded across multiple age groups, from under 14 to 80 years of age.





Heat ride hot  
shooting to  
123-100 win  
over the Suns

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# Saipan Tribune Sports

Guam's Low is  
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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

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MARK RABAGO

Participants and organizers of the 6th Saipan Duathlon held last Saturday from Banzai Cliff in Marpi pose for a group photo.



## Coach Mita, Kate Wilson dominate duathlon

By MARK RABAGO

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**M**ichitetu Mita and Kate Wilson topped the solo division of the 6th Saipan Duathlon held last Saturday from Banzai Cliff in Marpi.

Mita, the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association technical director, completed the 5-kilometer run, 20-km bike, and 2.5-km run in a time of 1:10:05 to win the men's solo category.

A far second to the 45-year-old Chiba, Japan native was



Norlo Jacosalem who finished in a time of 1:15:10. Right behind him was Arvin Velasco who crossed the finish line in 1:15:57.

Mita said he entered the solo division as a way to challenge

**See COACH on Page 19**



Wilson



Mita

## SBL's David Attao tenders resignation



MARK RABAGO

Former Saipan Baseball League board member David Attao, left, poses with national team strength and conditioning Joey Tudela and SBL president Jay Santos, right.

By MARK RABAGO

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The Saipan Baseball League is down a man after board member David Attao tendered his resignation.

He cited "some personal matters that I need to focus on" as the reason for his resignation from the SBL board.

"I love helping our community and when I do so, I always work hard to give 100% of my energy within the limited time. As a program, we have accomplished some short-term objectives that should have

long-term benefits that we set out to do in baseball. At this time and for the next few months, I personally need to focus on matters of great importance and value that need my attention and I choose to dedicate my limited time and energy to them," he said in a statement to the *Saipan Tribune*.

SBL president Jay Santos said the resignation of Attao from the SBL board is a big loss to the federation.

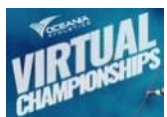
"We're sad to see him go. He's a vital part of the team.

**See SBL'S on Page 19**

## Ketola wins 1,500m on borrowed gear

By MARK RABAGO

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Keith Ketola won the 1,500m race of the local 2021 Oceania Virtual Championships held by Northern Marianas Athletics last Dec. 20 at the Oleai track and field.

The 25-year-old law clerk of CNMI Supreme Court Associate Justice John A. Manglona topped a three-person field in a time of 4:48.9 to beat Sildrey Veloria (5:28.7) and Tiana Cabrera (5:56)

Not bad for someone who didn't even plan to race that day as he only went to the Oleai Sports Complex to encourage friends who were competing.



LAO ZHANG

Keith Ketola in action during the 1,500m race of the local 2021 Oceania Virtual Championships held by Northern Marianas Athletics last Dec. 20 at the Oleai track and field.

"I felt okay about the race. It wasn't my best time! I didn't even expect to be competing that day when I showed up, as I was just there to watch," he said.

Ketola said he was persuaded by Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. to join the race last minute because the 1,500 event wouldn't be official unless there were three runners.

"Ed Dela Cruz talked me into it since the times for the others wouldn't count unless we had three participants. I didn't even bring running gear to the track and I had to borrow some."

While running completely unprepared eventually worked **See KETOLA on Page 19**